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THE STORY
OF
WALDEMAR KRONE'S YOUTH.

THE STORY
OF
WALDEMAR KRONE'S YOUTH.

BY
H. F. EWALD.



TRANSLATED FROM THE DANISH.



PHILADELPHIA:
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EXTRACT FROM LETTER TO THE PUBLISHERS.

“THE news of your intending to publish an English translation of my *Waldemar Krone's Ungdomshistorie* has afforded me great pleasure, for I shall thus, by means of my first and dearest work, be enabled to hold spiritual intercourse with a great, noble, and intelligent nation; and the works of Danish authors, you know, are destined to be read by a people, excellent and intelligent indeed, but few in number, whose language does not reach beyond the narrow bounds of our fatherland.

“I shall therefore gladly comply with your wish for a few observations illustrative of my literary labors, with which to accompany your translation.

“*Waldemar Krone's Ungdomshistorie* was my first work, for I did not commence my literary career till I was forty years of age. The book was published anonymously in the year 1860. It met with a most favorable reception—so favorable, indeed, that the first edition was sold in the course of a few months, and a second edition has since been published. I wrote next several stories in newspapers and periodicals, under my own name, besides two novels—*The Nordby Family*, three volumes, which appeared in 1862, and *Johannes Falk*, two volumes, pub-

lished in 1865. These works were received by my countrymen with the same approbation; and encouraged by this continued success, I am now occupied in composing a fourth and larger work, which it is my intention to publish before the end of this year.

“I shall feel both honored and happy if *Waldemar Krone's Ungdomshistorie* should be as favorably received and as leniently criticised in England as in my own dear fatherland.

“H. F. EWALD.

“FREDRIKSBERG, Feb. 5, 1867.”

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WALDEMAR KRONE.

CHAPTER I.

CHRISTMAS AT CAPTAIN STAINFORTH'S.

"THERE comes father!" cried two clear young voices in one breath, as the door opened and the captain entered the parlor. Two girls, who had been seated in confidential and earnest conversation by the window, rose hastily, and rushed to meet their father, as they bade him an affectionate good morning.

"Good morning," replied the captain's deep voice in a cheery tone; "but softly, children—keep off, I say; some time or other you will certainly squeeze me to death!"

He laughed joyously, and there seemed no imminent danger to the herculean frame from the pressure of two such slight figures as those of his two daughters. Captain Christian Stainforth was postmaster in one of the market towns of Zealand, which we shall call Stromby; and though the appellation did not much please him, he had become known far and wide as the big Captain, or the strong Postmaster,—epithets the justice of which could not be gainsayed by any one who had seen him.

"Good morning, Ida," repeated he, turning to his eldest daughter, and passing his hand over her rich brown hair, he looked into her dark blue eyes, which were as nearly as possible a copy of his own. He again kissed her fair brow, and then turned to the other side,

where little black-eyed Frederica looked up at him with her roguish glance. Ida had lately completed her sixteenth year, and been duly confirmed by the pastor; her sister was scarce past fourteen, so that she had not as yet got rid of the epithet, "Little Frederica."

"At this season, I declare, girls, it seems dangerous to approach you!" continued the captain humorously. "Now tell me, have you not fixed on something else to ask me for?"

"O yes," answered Ida, taking courage; "Frederica and I have been thinking this morning how delightful it would be to have some strangers with us at Christmas."

"Strangers, Ida?" replied her father. "That does not seem to me like a notion of yours!"

"I don't mean strangers exactly, but——"

"She means," interposed Frederica eagerly, "that we would like to invite Waldemar Krone and his friend Jacob Frank here for the Christmas holidays."

"Well, why not?" was the cordial rejoinder. "I shall be glad after the lapse of two years to see Waldemar once more; and as to Frank, I have more than one reason for wishing to make his acquaintance."

Frederica received this decision with great glee; Ida with quieter, but not less real satisfaction. Their mother now entered the room, and her gentle, pleasant countenance brightened as she saw the happiness of her daughters, and heard the reason. Thereafter appeared the captain's sister, the widowed Helene Kortsen, whose erect carriage and determined mien, not exactly softened by a pair of tortoise-shell spectacles, had always the air of protesting against something or somebody, one knew not well what. To the great discomfiture of her favorite, Ida, she appeared utterly uninterested by the news that young Krone and Frank were, if possible, to be freed for a day or two from bothering their heads with Cicero and Homer, with a view to share the Christmas festivities at Stromby. Both these lads at that time attended the Latin school at Ramsted, and were studying hard,

as next year they meant to undergo the examination for a degree.

The family now gathered round the breakfast-table, which bore the same stamp of frugality, joined to good taste, that marked the parlor where they sat, and indeed every part of the captain's house. But the postmaster was not long left in quiet at his coffee, for many minutes had not elapsed ere the veteran and trustworthy factotum of the office, with a pen behind his ear, and an evident eye to business matters, showed himself through the door behind. Old Brask's round good-natured face expressed at that moment the annoyance he felt at being obliged to disturb his superior on such an occasion; while, on the other hand, it was characteristic to observe the cordial heartiness of the captain's brisk manner in reply. He talked, indeed, so loud, that the uninitiated might easily have thought him scolding his worthy deputy; however, the actual reason for so high a tone of voice was only poor Brask's excessive dullness of hearing, as he received the necessary instructions.

Leaving the captain and Brask to their affairs, and the ladies to all the arrangements required by the approach of Christmas, let us follow the same road that Ida's hastily-written little note pursued, as a few hours afterward it went off by post to Ramsted.

Waldemar Krone, in a dark mood, sat in his little chamber in old Mrs. Brand's house, where, for a handsome payment, he had board and lodging during his stay in Ramsted. The prospect of spending the precious Christmas holidays in reading was not very pleasant; but he had still far more weighty causes for melancholy. He closed his book, pushed his handsome curly hair back from the not less handsome brow, and began to walk up and down the floor with so quick a step, that old Mrs. Brand, whose perceptions were dimmed by age, and who sat well wrapped up in her arm-chair in the room below, asked her daughter what was the meaning of so many vehicles rumbling past in the street outside.

Waldemar Krone had for some time back undergone

sundry bitter experiences, and he weighed them now in his mind with a certain dismal satisfaction; for in our happy school-days even our sorrows are a source of satisfaction to us, though, of course, we only discover this at a later period. He had nourished two illusions, the first of which was that there burned within him a poet's fire. How this idea had originated was not very clear to himself; but he found himself one fine day snared in the net of poesy; he read ballads instead of lessons, and wrote verses instead of exercises; and the consequence was that he fell far down in the class, drawing on himself a serious lecture from the rector, as well as a less agreeable letter than usual from his uncle, the chamberlain in Copenhagen.

How gloriously his short career as poet had begun! When he had put together his first verses he went about, proud as Lucifer, but modest as a maiden who fears to reveal the secret of her heart. Yet what poet is long content with the trees of the wood and the billows of ocean for his audience? He soon got a confidant. The confidant proved faithless; and the whole school learnt by degrees that in Waldemar Krone it possessed a poet. He became the object of admiration and of envy, while a very few of his comrades saw the matter in its true light, and among them Waldemar's friend, the reserved and distant Jacob Frank, who on this occasion had *not* been his confidant. As soon as this last became acquainted with the fact, he unsealed his lips, and let his friend know his opinion without scruple.

Waldemar had first attempted the classic style, but as the measure hindered the light step of his Muse, he went over to the poesy of patriotism, in which he succeeded rather better, till an envious adviser pointed out to him the somewhat close imitations of Oehlenschläger and Ingemann. Thus discouraged, he forsook the patriotic path, and entered the domains of horror, walked in the church-yard in the moonlight, wandered through the lanes about Ramsted possessed by grisly fancies; nay, came at last so far down in the inclined

plane of melancholy, that in imagination he put to death his dear uncle, merely to be able thus to sing his high deservings, while he was unhappily obliged to kill the rector twice, because the first elegy had been a failure.

Jacob Frank declared the whole of his friend's verses to be quite commonplace productions, and was confident that he could write several such daily, if it were worth the pains. Undoubtedly in this he did his friend an important service, by bringing him back to his duties as a student; but yet he was mistaken both as to the worth of the poetry, and the poetic instinct which discovered itself in their production. The matter has its ludicrous side, but far be it from us to slight the yearning which rouses in a young heart such strong emotion, and denotes the growth of powers to be developed in the future. The crisis is in reality a grave one, and if not healthfully wrought out by nature, may leave painful traces throughout a lifetime. It is a dangerous time when the fancy and the feelings spread forth their silken sails, and the frail bark, adorned with flowers, but without ballast or compass, drives onward, only to approach at random the unknown coasts that seem to smile in the distance.

Must he now acknowledge, then, that all this which had so strongly moved in him was a mere nothing, a sickly dream, which the rector had even gone so far as to say might be cured by simple blood-letting? There was something in his inner being which rose up against the harsh judgment, and probably with reason. He might indeed be no future Oehlenschläger, as in his inspired moments he had fancied himself; but still, surely there was a true poetic fountain within him, which, if but duly guided, should conduce to enrich and adorn his life's career, whereas, left to its own wild course, it might yet change all into a useless marsh, with its dangerous sloughs and delusive meteors.

After his so-called mistake had been thus demonstrated to the satisfaction of his friends, it seemed to him like the very spite of Fate that he should straightway light

upon the track of a fresh illusion, to his fresh perplexity and distress. But it was in reality a very natural consequence of young Krone's poetic temperament that his heart was easily touched, and he all at once fell in love. The first pair of bright eyes set fire to such inflammable material, and unhappily these belonged to a person, poetically considered, quite unworthy of the honor.

We can best acquaint the reader with this little adventure, by telling what had happened to our hero a few days previously. He was walking down a suburban path, deep in such reverie as suited his case, when, at a sudden turn of the way, he perceived that he had nearly run down his uncle's old friend Kreutz, a major on half pay.

"Stop, Krone! keep off! respect an old invalid!" cried the major, holding out his stick. "Are you heading an assault? To the right-about, my good fellow; and, hark ye, just turn with me a bit; 'tis really so tedious walking alone."

"That is right, Krone," continued the major, as Waldemar, though with evident unwillingness, made the desired wheel round about, and allowed the major to take his arm. "Ay, it is a fine trait in your character, my lad, that you never let the old folks see when you are tired of their company."

"I never used to weary in *your* company, major," was the ready answer; "but the truth is, to-day I was more in the humor of solitude."

"Just so! It is, however, a long time since thou'st been to see me; and I long to hear how the old man in Copenhagen is."

"Thank you, sir; quite well," politely responded our student.

"I am glad to hear it. You are of late much altered yourself, Krone! You look moped, I think—too many books, my boy, take my word for it; too much droning over those musty old heathens yonder! But what a hurry you were in—eh? Anything the matter at home?"

"O no! nothing, sir; nothing, I assure you, of that kind."

"But of what sort, then, pray? Out with it now, my young friend! Stop a little though; I can guess it precisely. Is't a blank or a note at your name in the register? No; that's true enough; you wouldn't take that to heart so—at least to become blind of both eyes, and run against folks in broad daylight. A little tailor's bill, maybe—some extra item or so that is over what your worthy uncle pays for? Your smart air as to clothes has been a little spoken of lately; and from my own window, now I think of it, I have seen you actually go to school in your Sunday suit. It can't well be, surely, thou'rt so foolish as to have—ha, ha, there we hit it, I see! *Rem acu tetigi*, as we'd have said in my school-days; the boy has fallen in love—hey?"

Waldemar reddened to both ears, and would have protested, but the major made sure of the matter, and shrewdly puckering his great gray eyes, to bear askance upon his victim like a hawk's, he went on:

"Young blood is forward, and has plumped him right into it, I see. So my young friend Krone is in love, is he?—hm! Well, I wish you would open your heart to me, though! If there's any situation in life in which one stands in need of good counsel, it must certainly be when he has the misfortune to fall in love in his eighteenth year, and at school. I speak from painful experience, my friend."

Waldemar walked on, biting his glove, while he wished his old tormentor many miles off.

"You must not think now, Krone," said the major, "that I care about knowing the girl's name, for there is not in all Ramsted a single individual who would be a suitable match for Chamberlain Krone's nephew. You must to the great mart at Copenhagen when your time comes. Let me see your finger—no ring, not even a horse-hair one. All right; only let us have no betrothals in school. On the whole, you will do wisely not to let that come so far on this side of thirty; but cer-

tainly there is no harm in keeping yourself in practice a little—ha, ha!”

This view of the matter was so repugnant to Walde-
mar's youthful but noble idea of love, that he reddened
with anger, and would have torn himself free without re-
gard to circumstances, had not the major grasped his
arm and burst forth thus:

“*Apropos*, Krone; since we talk about love, d'ye
know I hear that half the lads in the school are capti-
vated in the same style—and can't guess by *whom*?
Why, by little Axelline Jensen, that chit of a girl!
Your comrades have miserable taste. Hark ye, I'll tell
you something, though in confidence: she is as stupid
as a goose—stupid as a marsh-goose; remember that,
Krone! Farewell, since it must be so at last, and give
my regards to your uncle when next you write.”

We doubt if this message ever reached Chamberlain
Krone, for his nephew quitted the major in great wrath.
His beloved was of course no other than the unhappy
Axelline Jensen, and it was the case that many of his
comrades shared in this his plebeian passion. The worst
was, that the more he thought over the charge of stu-
pidity brought against Axelline, the more he was obliged
to own that the major was right. How strange that this
had never struck him before! He did, indeed, make
some desperate efforts to fan the flame of his passion up
to the old height, but it was all in vain. His heart no
longer throbbed on seeing her bright ribbons and figured
shawl in the distance; her eyes, before so beaming, now
seemed to him lightened by a silly twinkle; her voice
had a vulgar ring in it; her coquettish address appeared
to him too frank by half. Gradually nothing vexed
him more than to meet this blooming, good-humored
girl on his way, and so to be reminded of his consuming
passion. It was only in riper years that he acknowl-
edged he had not been so much in love with Axelline as
with his own first budding sentiment.

A season of melancholy had ensued, during which he
sighed over the transient nature of all things, and after

what he had passed through, conceived himself an old man in experience; there occurred also bitter moments, when his most mortifying thought arose from a belief that these hallucinations had made him notorious among his companions.

In such a mood he found himself this evening when Mrs. Brand's girl knocked at the door, and delivered to him Ida Stainforth's little note. How well he knew his dear foster-sister's handwriting! How much he prized her letter, and how precious to him was she not herself! He had not seen her now for two years past, and her pretty childish image stood so clearly before his inner sight in all its purity that he blushed at not having answered her last letter, and during a yet longer time having thought so seldom of her. She had stepped into the shade to make way for his own poetic fooleries, and stayed there to leave room for such a creature as Axeline Jensen! He let the letter lie unopened for some moments, feeling that he had not deserved it; and while he leant his brow on his hands, his own childhood, like an immaterial vision, flashed before his memory almost in minute detail.

What were, then, his first recollections of childhood? What images were in his thoughts of his first home? Drawn-down curtains, the presence of strangers, two black coffins covered with velvet and silver, and adorned with flowers; these contained the remains of his parents, of whom a virulent typhus fever had bereaved him in the course of eight days; next the slow journey to the church-yard, when he sat alone in the carriage with Uncle Fritz, who did not weep, but put his dress to rights. There were the servants' grave faces at the funeral in the forenoon; their cheerfulness in the evening at the little entertainment, to which they had invited Uncle Fritz's Hans, Mrs. Admiral Been's Jane, and other sympathizing folks; the servant-girl's fright, too, when next day, on awaking in his uncle's house, he wished to put on his old blue trowsers instead of the black ones ordered by Uncle Fritz; yes, and more than

all these things, Uncle Fritz himself, of whom at that time he stood in supreme awe. All this taken together made up the sorrowful misty tableaux which he called his earliest recollections of childhood.

From behind, doubtless, something dearer and happier peeped out to tantalize him. About his father he had indeed but a vague recollection, as of a grave man, sparing of words, who seldom was at home; a smile, a glad, loving look was something with which he had often striven in vain to enliven his father's portrait in Uncle Fritz's parlor; whereas he preserved in his heart a much more vivid image of a woman with dark tresses, bright brown eyes, which sometimes rested on him with an expression of fervent gladness, or sometimes were filled with tears; her fresh lips came almost to life again, kissing him on the brow, the mouth, and hands. These kisses, and the glossy touch of that soft hair, he remembered, especially when he was despondent; then they would come waving toward his cheeks to soothe him, and in his dreams would cool his brow, as though it were the rustle of an angel's wing; and he felt that he had indeed had a mother. However beautiful the long-treasured portrait which hung on his chamber wall, the lineaments bore the conventional touch of the artist's style, its accessories and tints disguised the likeness, and it paled before these indistinct but indelible impressions.

He remembered well some unpleasant days in his uncle's house, while the latter held consultation with an intimate friend concerning his destiny; and much of what was then said but not comprehended by him he now understood from later information. Uncle Fritz blamed his brother because, though of noble birth, he had actually condescended to engage in commerce, and lost his fortune by the speculation thus involved; moreover, he had married the daughter of a poor merchant, and thus made his fault worse by a misalliance. His uncle said at the time that Waldemar was now a poor orphan, who would fall as a burden upon him, and that he must be good and diligent to deserve the kindness

shown to him; but he remembered also to have heard from others that his uncle, notwithstanding these cold words, had rendered his parents many important services; and he himself was thenceforth treated by Uncle Fritz as if he had been his own son. There were strange contradictions in his uncle's character, which at that moment he was not able to understand and reconcile.

It had then been determined to send him to Stromby, to Captain Stainforth, who had several boarders in his house, and his uncle himself brought him thither. There he had spent five pleasant years; and how many happy recollections streamed in upon him from that time! The little troubles he had had while there drew back into the shade, and only the pleasures came again. He especially remembered the sensible yet cordial behavior of the captain, his seriousness during the hours of instruction, and his merry mood in the social evenings, when they assembled round the parlor fire in winter, or, in summer, played about the spacious though homely garden; Mrs. Stainforth's unchanging tenderness and forbearance; and, above all, Ida's steady attachment to him.

What could be compared to those childish sports at Stromby? Never since had he seen any field so green or so sunny as that which bounded the captain's garden, and which seemed to him richer in delightful knolls, shady corners, or snug hiding-places, than any other ground on earth. The modest shrubbery and scanty belt of copse, with its well-known nut-bushes, were an interminable forest to his remembrance; the High Street in Stromby appeared to him endlessly long and broad; the plain church with high elms about it was grand in proportion.

Thrice in the year he had been in the habit of journeying to Copenhagen and visiting his uncle, and these journeys were of course like so many adventures in a fairy-tale. How vividly he remembered the arrival by the daily stage-coach at the inn-yard, where Hans was always waiting in livery, to place him in a carriage and

drive him to Amalie Street. *Nota bene*, Hans sat on the box with a stately pomp that never allowed one to forget that he was a guest; sometimes it was rather the stranger that had to be kept in mind; or the fancy would be suggested of being conducted to some strong fortress, as if implicated in political affairs. At Uncle Fritz's everything was handsome and well appointed, and there was a scent of perfume throughout the rooms. The worthy chamberlain himself was always gracious, often almost friendly, but seemed to his nephew so great a man amid these surroundings, that, for the first evening, at all events, he never felt at ease; nay, each time it was like coming to enjoy a friend's hospitality, if not the munificence of a patron.

It was true, there were some days that followed, like those in the thousand-and-one tales. He was taken to large handsome houses, saw magnificent people and charming children; nay, he was once at a Christmas-tree gathering in the mansion of Prince Christian himself; the Princess Caroline Amalie patted him on the cheek when he was presented to her, and said a word or two to Uncle Fritz in French, which Waldemar did not at the time understand, and afterward had forgotten. Certain it was he thoroughly enjoyed that evening, in spite of its restraints, all of which were borne more easily and pleasantly by far than he had believed possible. None of his companions at Stromby would believe him when he told them that he had run a race in the prince's hall, and even played there at blind-man's-buff. When they came home in the evening, Uncle Fritz had been in a very good humor, and said that now he hoped to have satisfaction in him, but that when he returned to Stromby, Waldemar must remember that he was a Krone, and not make associates of every one he met; in fact, even among his comrades, must be scrupulously select.

On his return to Stromby, he had, after a short time, forgotten his uncle's remonstrances. He went to Dorthe Handskemager's and played with her slovenly boys; he made friends with the butcher's Christian, in order to

be invited to the harvest-home. And though the captain told him he could not be allowed to go under any circumstances, he still gave Christian a drubbing because he had not been invited; this, however, ended in a reconciliation, and next Saturday evening he was favored to ride the butcher's gray horse to water in the river.

Yes, the river with the mill, the sluice, and the old majestic willow-tree, whose boughs hung down quite into the water—how full of interest the whole territory appeared to him, and how often he had sat here with Ida and Frederica, gathering flowers for them, or navigated the river in the miller's flat-bottomed boat! Here Ida had often sung to him, and her clear voice now sounded in fancy at his ear, when some one knocked at the door, and his fellow-student Frank straightway entered. Waldemar had during these reveries quite neglected their occasion, the letter from Ida, which seemed destined not to be opened as hastily as she had closed it.

"Ah, your book laid down, and the dictionary on the top of it!" said Frank in a satiric tone; "that is quite like you, Krone."

"I was dreaming for a moment," answered Waldemar, "and so quite forgot what brought forth the dreams." At the same moment he unfolded Ida's letter and read it hurriedly. There were no reproaches for his not having written for so long; she merely said that she hoped he was well, and in good spirits; next followed, in very pressing terms, the invitation for the Christmas holidays.

"Read that, Frank," said Waldemar, handing him the letter.

"What does it mean?" asked Frank, somewhat impatiently. "Have you given them a hint to invite me? They don't know me at all."

"Yes, yes," was the reply; "they know you through me, of course."

"You have no doubt given a poetic sketch of me, and

when they see the original it will seem to them very insipid."

"I have no share in your invitation, for I am ashamed to say that I have not written to Stromby for several months."

"Very sensibly! In the captain's place I would not allow my daughter to correspond with such a poet cavalier as you; you will certainly put many a crotchet in poor Ida's brain."

"Have you returned to the grumbling mood again, Frank? Have you, peradventure, got a letter from home, which has vexed you?"

"Letter from home! Do you think the old man ever writes to me? No, it is as if I were dead and away; though one would imagine he might forgive his only child the fearful crime of preferring study to cleaning raisins in his shop! My money comes through my uncle only—entirely from him, for all I know—and he *does* write to me, at a rare time. As for my father, when I was last with him he never once asked how I got on at school."

"It is very sad, Frank, that you so early lost your mother," Waldemar said.

"Yes, there is much more that is sad," answered his friend gloomily. "Sufficient to say, the old man's intention is, that when my degree is got, I shall maintain myself by it. Therefore it is I study so hard as I do. By *your* style of reading, Krone, one may easily see you have gold and green woods in prospect."

"Come, Jacob," rejoined his more mercurial comrade, "no more of that, as you love me! I have been more diligent lately than you think; and I am very grateful to you for the steady help I have had. How hard it is to make up for lost time, when one has been lazy a while!"

"A while, say't? Why," remarked the other somewhat sharply, "whatever the case is now, you never used to be what I call studious! No thanks, though—

you know how distasteful that is to me. Indeed, how all sorts of sentimentality are my abhorrence."

"You are marvelously amiable this evening!" laughed Waldemar. "But will you come with me to Stromby?"

"Well—no, then. Leave me to my own resources,—let me take care of myself, as I am accustomed to do. Holidays though they are, I don't need amusement. I shall not feel the want of it, believe me."

Jacob Frank was indeed accustomed to depend upon himself, and he kinged it in his dux place at the head of the class with solitary, gloomy majesty; for none of his companions felt drawn toward him except the impulsive Waldemar, and even the teachers acknowledged his studiousness less warmly than in most other cases. There was something about him which repelled advances, and a maturity which was certainly beyond his years. So different was he in temperament, origin, and education from Waldemar Krone, that one could not but be astonished at their close friendship. They had in common only a love for poetry and the beauties of nature, which was much developed for their years, but which yet expressed itself in each of them in a very different manner. This sentiment was, so to speak, young Frank's only religion; for he was already a skeptic, in a degree which would have horrified his superiors had they known it. Not natural tendency alone, but along with this a troubled and solitary childhood, had moulded Frank into what he was.

Waldemar, however, succeeded at last in persuading his friend to accept the friendly invitation of the Stainforths, a result which surpassed his expectations. The rector's permission was obtained without difficulty, and early on the day of Christmas-eve both friends rolled off to Stromby in a special postchaise.

Can anything be imagined more beautiful than a fine winter morning in those bracing regions of the north? Not merely were the fields and roads white, but the roofs of the houses, every little projecting ledge of the

walls, every twig on the trees and bushes; yea, even the least blade of grass was adorned as though for a festival. The clouds had overspread the earth with a swan-down of snow, and thereof woven for her a spotless kirtle, which the hoar-frost in the still starlight night had adorned with point-lace and fringes, and set with silver and precious stones. As now the sun rose, before lighting up the whole master-piece of nature, all had the luster of ermine around the soft purple shadows, interspersed with diamonds, and here and there an icicle for ornament or weapon, while the wind held its breath lest it should disorder the festive garment bestowed on the world by Heaven as a Christmas gift. The smoke breathed gently up from the chimneys, little flocks of yellowhammers and goldfinches whirled by, and a pair of hares stole slyly out of the kitchen-gardens of Ramsted, where during the night they had found shelter and abundant food; thus giving the last touches of an innocent animation to the scene.

Both Waldemar and Frank enjoyed this prospect with a sympathy not always partaken in their formal studies; for the freshness of youth still belonged, after all, to both of them; thus the journey itself yielded them so much pleasure that the day passed quickly. As they approached Stromby, Waldemar exclaimed:

"Now, Jacob, we can see Stromby church—that spire there between the high trees. A word with you: I am particularly curious to know how Stromby and all else will first strike you. What will you think of Ida specially?"

"Honestly, Krone," was the answer, "I have no great expectations concerning her. From what you have told me, she certainly has a high opinion of you, and shows it openly; so in return, of course, you overestimate her. I can but fancy her a good-natured, though perhaps rather commonplace girl."

"Commonplace girl!—well, I shall tell her that! But the captain will certainly gain your respect."

"Well, I am not so easily impressed in that way."

"True, Frank, we know you don't err on the side of veneration. I must, however, prepare you for finding the whole family what may be called original. I wager now that ere long you come to admire one and all of them."

"Enough, if I arrange to be entertained," said the other more gayly than before; "it is certainly something, in these days, to hit on aught like an original character."

"Yes, people say that the Stainforths are—well—pious," continued Waldemar, in a very thoughtful tone.

"Ah! saints—so much the worse! Sanctimonious folks are my especial abomination."

"Not just so fast," laughed Waldemar. "No fear; I merely echoed the talk; but you must, for example, be prepared for their singing a hymn on Christmas-eve."

"If that be all—well; we may surely sing with them if we get off so?"

"I will also tell you that the Stainforths have had much sorrow. They have lost several children, and there are but the two daughters left. The others died young, except the last, the eldest, a son named Harold, whom I knew, though he was much my senior. He left Stromby while I was there, as he then went off to the Art Academy to cultivate the talent for drawing which he had shown in a remarkable degree. He died a year ago, and I have not seen them since. The captain is said to bear the affliction with fortitude; but Mrs. Stainforth took it so deeply to heart that Ida wrote me at the time her hair had turned quite white from grief."

"It is odd," said his friend, "that in speaking of them you mentioned nothing of all this before. 'Tis scarcely pleasant to come as a stranger in such a state of matters."

"Why, it is so painful," explained Krone, a little awkwardly, "to think on the dead, and I feared you might doubt the reality of grief like this, having no idea, of course, that you would ever visit there. I never saw you with a tear in your eye at any burial,

Frank; not even when poor Jan Steinsen died so far from home, and from his dear 'Vestindy,' as he termed it."

"If so, I can't help it. Nature is to blame, you'll allow," was the answer. "I have no flow of tears ready. But you may as well tell me a little more of the captain's family ere I plunge into the house."

"I said they were originals," his friend went on. "In the first place, they help the poor of the town with their counsel whenever required, and with their money too—of which last there is sometimes too little to spare for the purpose. To make up for any such deficiency, the good captain has a peculiar turn for settling disputes, arbitrating in quarrels, and putting all sorts of matters to rights without resort to law; so, at least, the neighbors in Stromby seem to think; and whether it be to humor him or not, in any case he generally manages it with them, somehow or other. Worthy old Brask—when I think how often in the old days I teased the honest soul!—calls the captain the town's father: and there is something in it; for, in spite of the sheriff, and the minister, Mr. Bek, he is the man who has most to say in the place. Then, if his judgment be doubted, there is an unquestionable respect for his strength; and I remember that once at a market he freed a poor old Jew from their clutches. As to the post-office affairs—. But here we are almost in the town, Frank; and it is well, for I really long to see the dear folks again after the lapse of two whole years. At my last visit what spirits we were all in! How will it be now, I wonder?"

A wintry fog had come over the country by the time they noiselessly rolled through deep snow into the town. The sight of this second home of his childhood did not this time make that impression on Waldemar which in fancy he had represented to himself. All seemed to him much smaller and more contracted than he had thought, while his experiences in the course of the last two years now raised him far above the poor boys who ran past and threw snowballs at each other, as he too

had done in the old days. The charm of his dream vanished at this sober contact, and he could not but ask himself if their reception at the Stainforth's might not be equally disappointing.

The coach stopped short at the captain's gate, shaking from itself a powdery mist of snow, and half enveloped in the frozen steam from the horses; while the laden branches dropped loose flakes from above at the stir of the driver's whip-shaft. Ida did not come, as Waldemar had expected, springing forth to meet them, but "little 'Rica'" was visible on the steps of the open house-door beyond, and immediately after the captain came out to welcome them heartily. When he stood opposite the captain, Frank did not feel himself so bold as he had anticipated; it even occurred to him that he was regarded with a rather inquisitorial glance. Frank was awkward in his manner, and therefore ill suited to mix among entire strangers; moreover, Krone's probable poetic sketch of him beforehand annoyed him unspeakably.

Within the doorway stood Mrs. Stainforth, hospitably cordial; her gentle countenance and friendly tone inspired courage again in the new guest. But next appeared a form somewhat less reassuring, and new even to Waldemar, namely, that of the aunt, Mrs. Kortsen. Her decided face and keen profile were very different from her brother's hearty, genial features, the family likeness notwithstanding; she reminded one of the captain rather in his masculine lineaments, and her self-possessed, penetrating glance was apt to put forward young folks wholly out of countenance. There was no air of forwardness about Jacob Frank, it was true, rather the reverse, and accordingly her address on the occasion was sufficiently placid; yet she still looked through her spectacles at Waldemar and Frank, as if she would say, "Let us now see of what caliber you two young sparks may be."

Finally came Ida from beyond Aunt Lene. But was it really she herself? It was, at all events, quite a different Ida from her of whom Waldemar took leave two

years ago. From a well-grown little girl, with curls all round, she had now shot up erect and slender, a young lady in her teens; the dark-brown hair lay smooth, though full of waves, about a face that had grown more oval, the profile straighter and more delicately formed, the roguish dimple in the chin still there, and the eyes still the same, only larger and more expressive far. She advanced lightly and gracefully to her foster-brother, who seemed a little taken by surprise; she offered him her hand with an ease that had its part in restoring him, and wished him good day with a voice the soft music of which appeared as new and strange as all the rest. Next she bowed to Frank, perhaps rather ceremoniously, but still with a polite smile.

Young Mr. Krone answered Ida's salutation with a bow, the stiffness of which surprised himself; nevertheless, young Mr. Frank came through the ordeal still worse, for he stuck his legs together with a convulsive attempt at etiquette, blushed up to the roots of his hair, and ended by a sudden fit of coughing to disguise the fact.

After the scene of welcome had been thus gone through, Waldemar was troubled by the apprehension that he looked to his friend Jacob a clodhopper, and he therefore made a possibly heroic attempt to show that he was at home; rubbing his hands in each other, casting himself in an easy chair, and entering into conversation with Ida in a far louder voice than was in the least necessary. He thanked her for her last kind letter, but did it in such a constrained manner, as would greatly have astonished himself could he have observed it. Ida, too, felt embarrassed, especially when he thanked her for the letter; she was ashamed to think how childish and familiarly she had written to him; in their letters they had remained children, but now, when they saw each other again, how entirely different from what they had anticipated was this meeting to both!

'Rica had her laughing eyes everywhere, and wondered that Frank did not talk to her; but poor Frank had

other matters to attend to: he was in great perplexity about his hands; he took them out of his pockets, thrust them in again, and busied himself with several other matters of like importance. At last the captain came in, like an angel of deliverance, took him into the window, which gave him something to lean against, while the cord of the window-blind supplied abundant and varied employment for the idle fingers. The captain, meanwhile, showed his interest in the young guest by questioning him about the school and the teachers, till Mrs. Stainforth came to say that dinner was ready.

The smell of excellent soup met them as they entered the dining-room, and they were soon seated at the round table. Mrs. Stainforth helped the soup; the captain grasped the corkscrew to be ready with the flask; Waldemar Krone made himself as agreeable as might be to Aunt Lene; Jacob Frank was at the same time offering the bread-basket to "the commonplace girl," Ida, without daring to look at her, and little Frederica executed with childish delight, and not without grace, the office of the absent servant.

By degrees, however, Frank thawed, and found himself involved in a lively conversation with Ida, to whom he gave an enthusiastic description of the beautiful winter landscape he had seen that morning, while he still, with a certain caution, strove to avoid bombast; but the effort was manifest, and gave some stiffness to his account, which otherwise was not wanting in critical perception. Frank's views of the beautiful and the natural were peculiar, his affectation consisting in an exaggerated horror of the artificial, and a certain forced chase after the natural. Hence he told as something interesting that the postillion blew false notes—for that was natural for a Zealand postillion; on which Ida remarked that false notes were always hideous, and that her father had often been annoyed that the postillions did not learn to sound their horns better; however, the piece the coachman blew as they drove up to the door at Stromby must have been perfectly satisfactory, she

said, to Mr. Frank's sense of harmony; for not merely the melody, but each individual note, had gone quite wrong, so that there was at least no discord in it, and the poor tune rushed out, so to speak, with a triumphant consciousness of being something new and strange. Thus lightly she now and then exposed his paradoxical vein, discovering a clear and sound intelligence of her own; while the friendly glance and the smile on her fresh lips disarmed in a marvelous manner Frank's love of argument. Ida, on her side, felt pleasantly surprised, as by degrees the young student became lively, while his candid blue eyes and vigorously-marked countenance got free from the expression of watchful reserve that had at first shaded them.

"I have to give Brask's regards to you, Waldemar," said the captain after dinner. "He went yesterday to the house of his brother-in-law, the schoolmaster, Petersen, and as he is not to be back till the third day after Christmas-eve, you will not see him."

Waldemar regretted this much, as he would have liked Frank to make Brask's acquaintance. The afternoon passed pleasantly; the old, or rather the young, Ida of childish days came more to light again, and now Waldemar recognized her perfectly. He himself forgot his bitter troubles and high experiences of Ramsted, growing cheerful and natural, both to the satisfaction of the family and to Frank's considerable wonder, as his friend had never come out half so well at school.

In the evening, when the candles were brought, the captain went out for a moment, and came back with some books under his arm. Ida then opened the piano-forte, and trimmed the lights.

"We are accustomed on Christmas-eve, my good Frank," explained the captain, though evidently from a courteous feeling alone, "to sing a short hymn. We elder folks used to do so in our parents' homes long ago, and I like to keep up the old fashion. Methinks, too, 'tis easy to see how well the gladness of the season fits with such an act of worship."

Waldemar looked to Frank, and Frank looked to Waldemar. The latter did his best to muster up a dignified gravity of air, while the other's face was crossed by a moment's gleam of satiric humor, both assuming that the captain did not observe it, nor catch the mutual look of guilt passing between them. Of course they took the hymn-books. The captain sat down to the instrument, and after a few notes of suitable prelude, the whole family sang No. 138 of the hymns with fervent devotion, in which the quivering voice of old Ellen, the maid-of-all-work, was by no means lost. The incident seemed so appropriate for such a household, that Frank himself was not ill pleased, and even became poetically moved to unite in the air, but the Christian tenor of the words touched him not at all.

Waldemar, on the other hand, felt himself at first almost abashed for his friends, yet their imperturbable devotion impressed him as the second verse was sung:

“Go forth to every realm of earth,
Ye angels; bear from heaven
The news of that most blessed Birth
Which God to us hath given!

“To us a Saviour child is born,
Hope is for us restored;
None now can ever be forlorn—
Our kin is made the Lord!”

His glance at the same moment fell on his foster-mother's whitening hair, which sorrow had indeed bleached before the time; he remembered suddenly the many losses she had suffered, in particular that last and greatest of them. His heart was moved to warmest sympathy, and he willingly forgave the emotion, conscious of its tender claims on him. But his Christmas devotions reached no further; he never once entered into the glorious sense of consolation and joy they might afford. Both the young men felt much relieved at the close, when the captain played the concluding accord, and rose up to wish them all a merry Christmas.

The festive brightness of a Christmas-tree now streamed

forth to meet them from the opened inner doors, and soon gave them something else to think about; for the longer the little circle was assembled in the Christmas-rooms the more social it became. In Frank's case it was as if he had begun to taste for the first time the freshness of his youth, hitherto cramped and undeveloped in his forlorn early life. He this evening made an experience, to which he often afterward recurred, that at Captain Stainforth's there was a cheerfulness quite independent of externals, and very different from what the world called pleasure. Whatever had been the troubles there, they had not taken happiness away—at any rate the power to diffuse it. The charm was in fact irresistible; it became infectious; one never felt bored or had too much of it here, and he could not help asking himself whence this arose.

Yet he had relapses of the old weakness, as when he keenly contemplated the fine sketch in Indian ink, which Ida had just given Waldemar as a Christmas gift. He did not, it is true, observe his friend's delight on receiving it, or Ida's beaming glance as Waldemar had thanked her. Frank looked at the sketch itself, which faithfully represented Stromby Mill, with its walls of timberwork, its straw roof, and the great wheel, which was in evident motion, while the water rushed forth over it liquid and lively. All this Frank found drawn with much truth, but unfortunately the foreground was formed with rather too implicit a confidence in local nature, by the great old willow, whose boughs hung quite down into the water. Such a beautiful and remarkable willow Frank had never seen in actual landscape, so that Ida Stainforth must have flattered the original—in short, must have idealized it—an unpardonable mistake by his severe rules, and one which he felt bound, on behalf of nature at large, to point out to her. This delicate duty, which his higher sense of beauty pitilessly imposed on him, he executed in so refined a manner that Ida at first scarcely understood his meaning. As soon as this became clear to her, however, she laughed merrily, and answered that

this was the way with most people; no one would believe in the size and aspect of the old willow-tree till they had seen it themselves; so she hoped that next day he would be able to come and see for himself. Frank was silent, speculating a moment on how it was that this "common-place girl" always thus parried the force of his arguments, if not, indeed, retorting them more nimbly still; but the commencement of a Christmas game set aside all deeper interests for the time.

The first of the Christmas holidays was bright sunshine, setting all the family early astir except Aunt Lene. Ida stole up to her aunt's room to catch her in bed—stepping merrily in at the door with a jest on her lips. Her cheeks were rosy, her bright eyes sparkling, a smile on her lips like that of the first spring sunbeam, only warmer and livelier, hope and pleasure mantled over her whole fair face and about her elastic step. If need had been to find reasons for her gladness, enough perhaps that she was only sixteen years old, the future free before her young heart, a warm home at hand, with friends like hers; doubtless anticipating, dreaming, she herself scarce knew exactly of what—the girl felt but as countless girls have done before.

"Good morning, aunt! a merry Christmas to you!" said Ida, holding the bed-curtains together, so that only her eyes peeped in. "You have slept well to-day! It is near nine o'clock!"

"Is it, my child?" said Madame Kortsen. "Well, last night was a fatiguing one for an old body like me."

"Yet a most delightful evening!" persisted Ida. "I cannot remember that we have spent the Eve so well for long and long. Tell me what you think of our Waldemar."

"Oh, really! A little conceited he certainly is; but so, of course, are a great many young ones at his age."

"There you are unjust to him, I think! But it is odd: I have had a presentiment that you would not like him. 'Tis true, I may have been in fault to praise him

before you as I have done, but that is prejudice, you know, aunt! You have allowed yourself to be prejudiced against Waldemar!"

"Did ever one hear such accusations! But tell me now *your* opinion of young Frank."

"Oh, I like Frank well enough, I think," said the girl. "He is an intelligent, well-disposed young man, though perhaps a little obstinate."

"He is unassuming at all events, and decidedly reserved. That sort of character, Ida," remarked the old lady pointedly, "ever attracts me most."

"Waldemar is my brother, Aunt Lene, and now my only one."

"There you tell me something quite new, my child!" was the rejoinder. "He is the son of Krone, the wholesale merchant, I know; and I am aware further, that his uncle the chamberlain, who adopted him when a child, sent him to board with your father, where he remained till he went to school, like so many others. Do you look on all the boarders that your father has had as your brothers? It is a question if Waldemar Krone, when he comes to years of discretion, will care to speak of this brother-and-sisterhood. You will therefore act most prudently in not considering him as your brother."

"Not my brother!" answered Ida slowly, while her look, so lately full of gayety, first expressed doubt and surprise, then a bashfulness, that made her face crimson all over. She however recovered herself, and looked her aunt calmly and innocently in the face.

This was not the first time that Madame Kortsen had tried to throw a damp on what she considered the too warm feeling and lively fancy of her brother's daughter; but it happened now and then that her well-meant words had almost the opposite effect of that intended. Ida was her favorite, because she discovered in her traces of that clearness of judgment and firmness of character which was peculiar to the Stainforth family. So far Aunt Lene declared Ida to be a daughter worthy of the captain; but she found by the side of this a

sprightlier element, which she considered an inheritance from the mother, and which might easily attain the preponderance. Mrs. Kortsen distrusted Ida's leaning toward enthusiasm, and considered her turn for the romantic a source of unhappiness, since the child's expectations of the future were forced up to a pitch from which the reality must assuredly cast them down.

It was special tenderness for Ida that held Mrs. Kortsen to Stromby, and though the old lady seldom expressed her feelings, Ida's instinct told her that these cherished her tenderly. Helene Kortsen had come to Stromby a year and a half before, when her husband died, and she had sold their property of Petersminde. At first it had simply been her intention to remain there some weeks, and then proceed to Jutland to visit her brother-in-law, Pastor Peter Kortsen, at Bonderup; but she was so well pleased at the captain's that she had never got farther. She boarded with her brother, only complaining that he would not take so large a sum for this as she had wished, nor such as her ample means enabled her quite well to give, for her marriage had been childless.

The whole family now went to church, and Frank felt the necessity of accompanying them, however little inclined he might otherwise be. He had not expected to quit the house of God unvexed by priestly nonsense, as he called it; but he was agreeably surprised to find in Mr. Bek a very rational and judicious priest. The pastor drew from the great Gospel lesson of the day, "for us a Saviour born," nothing but a short homily on family affection and its beauties, dwelling principally on the joy that enters a house when a child is born; and with some few scanty hints of a further significance, impressively aided by a sonorous voice and pompous manner, he ended his discourse somewhat abruptly.

When the service was over, both the pastor and his wife came up and saluted the captain's family. The clergyman wished them a merry Christmas, and remarked, shortly after, that it would certainly be a

severe winter, which would be hard on fuel. His wife addressed Mrs. Stainforth in a very gracious way, the captain still more so, bowed somewhat stiffly and ceremoniously to Madame Kortsen, then favored Waldemar Krone with a warm shake of the hand, expressing her pleasure at seeing him again. She asked carefully after the health of his uncle, the dear good chamberlain, gave Ida and Frederica a passing nod, cast, lastly, an inquiring glance at Frank, and passed on with due dignity, while on every side people bowed to her.

The captain's family lingered some moments in the church-yard after the greater part of the congregation had quitted it; they looked at the little graves covered with evergreens, where rested so many of their lost hopes, and so much of their past happiness; their thoughts fixed themselves especially on the last and largest of the household graves, where Harold, their oldest and best-beloved son, reposed. God's inscrutable wisdom had so impressed the heart of Catherine Stainforth that she never forgot it, and that her worship never seemed to her completed till she had visited her children's graves. The captain reminded her meanwhile, as though to give another direction to her thoughts, of their departed friends who rested in the shade of the old elm-trees, and especially of a young girl whom the Lord had called hence in blooming youth, while she left behind her betrothed in inconsolable grief. Her grave was in the corner of the church-yard, and as they passed on to it, the captain was reminded how often he had tried to comfort the surviving friends, especially her betrothed, and that once, on the same spot, he had said to him, "Even here dwells hope for those who believe!"

As they went home, the captain asked Frank what he thought of the sermon they had heard that day. Frank thought it a little insipid, but otherwise a very rational discourse. The captain looked hard at his young friend, who cherished a secret dread of becoming the subject of an attempt at conversion. The captain,

however, contented himself with grasping his right hand in a very significant manner, while he exclaimed:

"If I were bishop, friend Frank!" He shook his burly hand in a fashion that seemed to speak volumes for himself alone. "Ah—ah!" he added emphatically; but the demonstration ended there.

In the afternoon they all took a walk to the mill, for the weather was still clear and fine, and Frank must now see the great willow that had become a question in Ida's picture. They went briskly along the road, and had already come a good way out of the town, when Frederica suddenly exclaimed:

"Oh, there comes Abel Cathrine!"

"How sad! she is quite wrong to-day," said Mrs. Stainforth, in a compassionate tone.

"Yes, she is certainly quite *drunk*," answered the captain more bluntly. "She has taken a little more than usual on account of the holiday. Shall I tell her what the minister said to-day in his sermon? It may, in truth, be a great consolation for an old sinner like Abel just to hear 'that we should raise ourselves to the pure and elevated stand-point of morality!' forsooth! God bless her, she sits low in the dirt!"

"God bless and keep your honor, captain," began Abel, as soon as she was near enough to be heard.

"Hold your tongue, Abel," answered the captain, "and go home and go to bed. You promised me some time ago to leave off drinking, and now you come in this condition on a day devoted to solemn worship!"

"Captain, believe me, I have kept the day holy," answered Abel, interrupting herself with sobs, blessings, and hiccoughs. "I have been down at the turnpike-house and laid out Mette Jensdalter, who died yesterday. We read psalms over her, and so we refreshed ourselves a little after it."

"That means that you drank a stiff half-pint or two, Abel?"

"Indeed it was Mette's own wish, captain. She took care that there was no want of either meat or drink. No

one should say that of *her* in the grave, said she, that we had hungered or thirsted when we dressed her; and so she died, good soul—alas, yes!”

“That is certainly quite true,” remarked the captain, when Abel had sailed off. “People live and die in this parish with the most extraordinary phlegm, and drinking is the chief cause of it.”

“Does the minister visit his parishioners?” asked Madame Kortsen.

“No,” answered the captain. “Pastor Bek is always at his books.”

“It would surely be very much out of place,” said Frank, eagerly, “if he ran about and thrust himself into family circles.”

“About that there are, as you well know, Frank, different opinions,” answered the captain gently. “It depends so much on how the business is executed; the rash and fanatic may do harm; the man penetrated by the true spirit of Christianity, much good. Yet good intentions never work entirely in vain, and to attempt nothing is quite unpardonable. I really believe there are not a great many pastors so remiss as this one, but still there are such.”

“I thought that most of them were too zealous,” observed Frank.

“Yes, for you and such as you: for I observe with regret, Frank, that in this particular there is a wide distance between us; but in one point we may certainly agree, namely, that it is not honorable to remain in the service of the Master whose cause we are secretly injuring. When a minister evidently does not believe the doctrine that he teaches, or, to speak more accurately, only gives to what he says a show of Christianity, he ought to resign his charge, or else his superiors should send him away.”

“It is so difficult to judge what a man properly believes,” said Frank.

“Ah no,” answered the captain, “not always. If we had had assembled in the church to-day the leading

men who differ most widely in their religious opinions throughout Christendom, I believe we should have found them agreed. For they certainly must have acknowledged that what we heard in the church to-day was not the gospel."

A religious disputation was, at that time—some twenty years ago—not so common as in our days; but Frank was, in scholastic matters, a true fighting-cock, and the captain, grieved by the lad's decided skepticism, at his age so unusual, gradually waxed warm. We shall see presently what turn their conversation took at last; but both these two and the rest of the little company were so taken up with more important thoughts, that they passed the mill without vouchsafing a single glance at the old willow, which, with the silvery brightness of the frost, looked gorgeous indeed.

Waldemar and Ida had fallen a little behind the others. "Don't walk just so fast, dear Ida," said Waldemar. "I have been wishing the whole day to talk with you alone."

"Is anything the matter with you, Waldemar?" she asked; "you look so grave."

"Ah, that was rare in the old days, Ida! Then I had no secrets from you, but now it is quite different."

"And can it not be again as it was then?"

"Perhaps; I am only afraid that when I have told you everything, I shall become ridiculous in your eyes."

"You ridiculous! That is impossible, dear Waldemar."

"I have been a greater fool than you are aware; only think, I fancied myself a poet, and was fearfully idle at school."

"I don't think that was ridiculous at all. In reading your letters I have sometimes thought the same, that you might become a poet; and even father said that they were uncommonly lively and entertaining. You must let me read your poems some day."

"I have burnt the whole bundle of them. And they were certainly poor stuff; at least so Frank said."

"In your place I would not care so much what other people say; and as for Frank, he has certainly some odd opinions of his own."

"But that is not the whole, Ida! The worst is that I have been——"

"Been what?"

"In love," answered Waldemar, in a dejected tone.

"And that," he added, "unworthily."

Ida looked at him rather surprised. Her look expressed disapproval, and at the same time no little perplexity as to what might be required of her; suddenly she turned to him and asked:

"Oh! tell me, then, if it is not a wrong question, in what way you were affected when you were in—the state you mention."

"Well, at first it was delightful enough, but that did not last very long; when it passed away, I became dreadfully vexed about the whole affair."

Ida had turned red, yet now laughed heartily, as if a stone had fallen from her heart.

"I knew," said Waldemar, shocked, "that you would make a fool of me."

"It must have been a strange sort of love that, dear Waldemar."

"Whatever sort it was," answered the youth, "at least you may be certain of one thing—that I fell in love, and very deeply too! You only laugh, do you, Mademoiselle Ida?"

As Waldemar looked indignantly at his foster-sister, it struck him, in spite of his wrath, how pretty she was. Her fine features were animated by some feeling he could not interpret, and that arch dimple, of which he caught the last glimpse, gave him something to think about. It struck him that he must have seemed a mere boy in her estimation, while, on the other hand, she herself was no longer the girlish companion of old days; his pique was roused, and his self-conceit underwent a severer shock than ever before; still a better feeling gained the mastery, and he said in a hearty tone:

"It is silly of me to be vexed, and abominable to be angry with you! I have never cared for any one so much as for you; otherwise, indeed, how ungrateful should I be, Ida!"

This avowal seemed not to give the full satisfaction intended, for she remained silent, walking on quicker than ever, and looking pale, as if she felt the cold of the air.

"We must soon part again, dear Ida," continued he, "but you may rely on it that I shall never again forget you. And just see how regularly I shall write! Will not you answer me?"

"It seems to me, Waldemar," answered Ida gently, "that such assurances ought not to be necessary between us—old friends as we are."

Waldemar felt, after this answer, still more dissatisfied with himself; and Ida walked quickly on till they overtook the others.

The captain and Frank had fallen behind. Let us hear what the captain says:

"You must try, my good Frank, to lay aside this mistrustful temper and bitterness of mind. It is slow poison, but a very certain one, to anything like worth of character in the end! Look, now, how it stands in the present case: your intimacy with Waldemar Krone made me inquire about you, and as I heard nothing but good, my interest was awakened. I had known your father long ago, and I remember him as a highly respectable and sensible man. I am, therefore, inclined to believe that this breach between him and you, or to say the least of it, the coldness which exists, is partly your own fault. Cultivate a softer, more peaceable sort of mood, look ye; don't be so terribly independent in your way of it, and take my word, all may be well again."

"I really don't see why you say this to me, Captain Stainforth," answered Frank in an offended tone; "I have done nothing that I can reproach myself with. I really think you should rather let each one go on in his own way."

"Hm! I must then tell you that I have my information from your own uncle. He states that your father is now failing in health, and has shown certain traces of a desire for reconciliation. Next, your uncle expressed to me his doubt if he could influence you in this matter, for you seemed about as obstinate, he writes, as your father was in his young days. He would wish there were any one who could bring you to reason, and if I had had any acquaintance with you, he would have begged me—certainly it does not sound very pretty, but such is his style of putting it—to edge in a good word or so with you, for your own father! I have, indeed, only known you for four or five hours, my good lad, but still I felt urged to this mode of dealing, which, on closer consideration, you will doubtless not find so very strange."

Here Frank now had also got something to think about, and it occurred to both the friends that the height of their Christmas enjoyment was already over; but things brightened up again for each of them notwithstanding.

It was admirable weather for sledge-driving, but the early winter had so surprised people that most of the sledges were not in serviceable condition the first day. Thus the inhabitants of Stromby were brought to all the windows, when, on the afternoon of the second day after Christmas, a handsome sledge, with a pair of well-conditioned brown horses, drove through the town and turned in at the captain's gate.

"Did I not think so?" cried the captain, who, followed by the whole family, came down to the gate. "Welcome, Bruun and Clara. Why, you look just like a May rose! Art there, little Christian? I could not see you for furs and coverings. Give me a kiss, my godson! How the beasts smoke; indeed, you have not spared them!"

"It is good for them to get into a sweat once in a way," answered Bruun, springing from the sledge-box and stamping the snow from his loaded boots; "we have

only been twenty minutes in driving the whole Danish mile from Randrupgaard here."

The pleasure at this not altogether unexpected visit was as great as if it had been an intentional surprise. The captain had certainly a large family; for Clara Bruun was also a foster-daughter of the house, and the first child that had been boarded there. Who was she, then? The illegitimate child of unknown parents, who at the age of fifteen had been thrust forth into the world to earn her bread. Her existence had been branded with a stain which the honorable inhabitants of Stromby had difficulty in forgetting, since for a whole year she had been housemaid to the town-clerk. But whether her unhappy mother, whom she lost in her twelfth year, had been possessed of some means or influence which at last accrued to her daughter, or in whatever other mode Clara acquired it, so it was that she aspired to a higher position than at first she had taken. What many people would call *chance* then led her to the Stainforths, where she was received as a member of the family.

It was quite natural that the young ladies of Stromby should in general decline to open their circle to a person whom they had seen run errands in the town. What, too, might her own character be? Here was a wide target for conjecture, and it was hit in all directions, by shots across and athwart. The ladies turned their heads the other way when they met her on the street, and made her feel so keenly their contempt, that poor Clara now and then wished herself back in the town-clerk's kitchen. The captain, however, understood how to defend her, and by degrees the feeling toward her became better, till one fine day Mr. Bruun, the handsome proprietor of Randrupgaard, cast his eyes on her, and let the daughters of both the sheriff and the controller of customs sit while he danced with Clara Schmidt. Martin Bruun's property was worth a pot of money, and he had for some years been in the enviable position of being able, as the saying is, to get any girl he pointed at. Many intelligible hints had been given him with regard

to this, but he had remained deaf and blind until he saw Clara. Now the clamor burst forth again, and as Clara had as charming a complexion, as bright light-blue eyes, and as rich fair curls as any girl in Denmark, her personal advantages were undeniable; accordingly, as the way of the world goes, the storm of indignation became a real tempest.

"Why, there are handsome and unexceptionable girls treading on each other's toes in town here," exclaimed the pastor's wife, in a company of spiteful mothers, when the betrothal first became known, "and yet an eligible man like proprietor Bruun throws himself away on—Clara Schmidt!" The world can indeed run like a furious bull, but the captain was not afraid to take it by the horns, and on a fitting occasion he brought the pastor's wife to silence in so striking a manner that she did not forgive him for a long time. He had actually the insolence to say that it was cruel, and even wicked, especially for a Christian minister's wife, to talk of her neighbor as she talked of handsome Clara.

Bruun and Clara soon bid the world's opinion good day by becoming a happy married couple. He was one of those healthy, active, happy, but quiet men, who, with a certain ease, stride over the thorns and petty stumbling-blocks of life; his mere presence awakened a genial feeling, and, as Madame Kortsen said, one might keep in good humor merely by looking at him. Clara was a high-couraged, generous-minded woman, and loved him with a truth corresponding to his fearlessness of choice. How much did she not owe to her foster-parents? What would her lot have been without them? Therefore it was not merely in the days of merriment that Clara Bruun's form was seen on the captain's threshold. When Harold Stainforth lay on his sick-bed, she had taken up her abode for some time at Stromby, and strove by her foster-mother's side, step by step, with death, until at last he carried off his prey. By the sick-bed we learn to appreciate women; there women are often men, and men prove weaker than women.

"How handsome Waldemar has become, Ida!" whispered Clara Bruun, as in the evening they sat in a cheerful circle, while the gentlemen were social over the punch-bowl. "He has certainly a pair of fine brown eyes."

"Yes, so it is generally thought," answered Ida.

"There is something noble about him," her friend added, "but he seems to know it himself."

"Still, you can put up with that," was the reply; "for one finds so much awkwardness and reserve among young gentlemen, that it is often doubtful what to make of them."

"Mr. Frank has a little of that air," said Madame Bruun, "and I can't say he took my fancy at the first glance. Still, I think perhaps he would improve on acquaintance."

"Oh, well enough for that," admitted the girl. "Though the difference perhaps is, one does not wish for change in Waldemar."

"Are you talking about *me*?" exclaimed Waldemar Krone, suddenly turning round from the table.

"Don't suppose it!" answered the young matron in the corner.

"One of you, I thought," the young man persisted, "distinctly mentioned my name?"

"True, sir," assented Clara, "only it was of Waldemar the Great that we spoke."

"And of his valiant knights," added Ida, in the same light vein.

"So you wish me to believe that you two sit there and whisper about Waldemar the Great?"

"To whisper is a lady's privilege," argued Madame Bruun, "and one you ought to respect, Mr. Krone."

"What did you say about me?" he gayly persisted.

"That since the old days you had perhaps become a little conceited."

"Is that also your opinion, Ida?" asked the youth.

"I fear so," was Ida's doubtful answer, mitigated only by the faintest flicker of a smile.

The captain, Bruun, and Frank were in the midst of a dispute about betting on horse-races, considered from every possible stand-point, when the door opened, and something appeared which at first seemed but a large bundle, with a huge cape to it; but by degrees were disclosed a broad, round face, glowing with the frost, and a pair of fur-mittened hands, like the paws of a bear.

"Brask!" cried all in chorus.

There was now such merriment and hand-shaking that Brask nearly lost his balance. He did not get leave to seek his lodgings in peace; the cloak was fairly pulled from him, and he soon sat with the others by the steaming punch-bowl. At first, from mere sneezing, coughing, and clearing the hoar-frost off his hair, the worthy man could not answer all the questions which streamed in upon him.

"This is a severesort of winter, ladies and gentlemen," were the first articulate words he got out.

"But how comes it, Brask," asked the captain, "that you arrive a whole day before your time?"

"You may well say that, sir," owned Brask, apparently surprised at his own precipitate conduct; "still, there was such an excellent opportunity with the carrier, and the captain has now had enough of the office alone; I fancy, being two whole days in it by himself."

"Why," said Captain Stainforth, "you surely knew well enough that Jensen would do your work; but I see you wearied for the dear registers."

"He, he! Yes. Perhaps, after all, captain," agreed the honest old official, "I do find myself most at my ease in the office."

"Had you a pleasant Christmas-eve, then, Brask?"

"Tolerably; yes, pretty well," was the answer, with a gleeful rubbing of the hands, and a sip of the hot liquor. "You see, my sister was expecting a baby, and just on Christmas-eve she got twins."

"That must rather have disturbed your enjoyment,

though, my good Brask," said the captain, while the whole circle joined in hearty laughter."

"Not at all, captain—certainly not, sir! To be sure, I had to sit in charge of my sister while my brother-in-law fetched the good woman, and that was a little awkward at the time. But when it all passed over there was no small rejoicing, and the old lady was good enough to say that the Lord's blessing now rested on Korsby School."

"True, true; 'tis a blessing that gives the good crone her livelihood," remarked his superior. "But what said your brother-in-law, who, if I miscount not, had seven children already?"

"I never knew him so glad before, sir," said Brask, grinning; "and as for my sister, she swallowed off a whole beaker of the strongest punch ever mixed; nay, did not seem to think aught of it at all."

The merriment was not exactly diminished by this relation, and Aunt Lene, in particular, could not forget Brask's pleasant Christmas-eve.

At eleven o'clock there was a tinkling and stamping outside the gate; the sledge was there, and the Bruuns must go home. Bruun lamented that Krone and Frank made so short a stay, as he should have wished to have them up to Randrupgaard.

"That may be the next time," said their host, as he stood on the stairs surrounded by the young folks; while Brask reached out behind him from the top step, holding a great candle above their heads to the snow, as if it were a small matter in the cause of courtesy to drip them all over with tallow.

"Yes, certainly the next time!" cried Bruun, adding a cheerful good night, and thanks for a pleasant evening. Clara nodded and smiled; the horses pranced, the bells jingled, and they were off.

"So, then," said Frank to Waldemar that night, as they went to bed, "this glorious time will now be soon past. How hard it will feel to-morrow to go back to plod under slavery at Ramsted. Next time, said the

captain! When, think you, Krone, that will be? Perhaps never!"

"Why so? But I am glad that you have enjoyed yourself so much here! Is it not true that all has surpassed your expectation?"

"Yes, almost in every respect! They are delightful people—all, without exception."

"Even the 'commonplace girl?'"

"Nobody and nothing in the captain's house is commonplace, least of all Ida. She is a charming girl, Krone, and what is more, she is perfectly natural. I really think that the few conversations I have had with her are among the greatest pleasures I have ever enjoyed."

"That sounds very warm from such an icicle as you are; but you took no notice of poor Frederica."

"Well, she is only a child as yet, though she promises not badly; her time will come likely enough, but she can never be Ida's equal."

This reply Frank remembered in after-times.

The third day of Christmas the morning rose with fog, storm, and thaw, and the splendor of the foregoing days disappeared in moisture of the most odious kind. The rain at last drizzled athwart it; the blast shook the windows and whistled below the doors, apparently in anger at having been fettered during three whole days, and eager now to indemnify itself by its wild dance. Snow slid off the roofs at intervals, water streamed incessant in the streets, all passed into unpleasant change, as if thousands of unseen spirits toiled laboriously to obliterate every trace of Christmas festivity; and soon the earth was old, gray, and muddy as before, with a be-draggled look to boot, like some intemperate reveler.

But the weather harmonized well with the young people's mood, as they assembled that morning in the parlor, and the hour of parting struck. The captain spoke apart with Frank, affectionately besought him to reflect on what he had said to him, and not to forget his friends at Stromby when he required a little relaxation. To

Waldemar he said, that from Frank he had heard with delight of his strenuous efforts to become a distinguished student; he begged him to feel assured that his friends here in Stromby, even if his path and theirs should part in the course of time, would still always follow him in thought with affection. Mrs. Stainforth was all kindness, and even Aunt Lene showed herself a little more soft than her everyday wont.

Ida was very silent, and her eyes had not their usual brightness; her mother accordingly felt convinced she had caught cold the previous night when standing at the door, and now insisted on her wearing a little handkerchief round her throat; its color alone lent a tint to her cheek; even the half-muffling folds did not ill befit the grace of her neck, and somehow the quaint sprigged pattern was for a time inwoven touchingly with her image in the minds of both young men.

When Waldemar and Frank were away, Ida went up to her room, took out a silver chain which Waldemar had once given her, wound it round her hand, and sat a while in deep thought. There might have been a magic in this chain, which link by link inclosed her little hand, for she became almost clairvoyant. She read far into the future, and there was some romance her heart had imagined, which now seemed to come to an ill end. The shade on her forehead deepened. When she was weary of reading forward, she read backward; only then the smile half returned to her rosy lips. The uniform life of Stromby offered little to replace quickly outworn impressions; and good Aunt Lene sometimes remarked that Ida was graver than before. Whenever the name of Waldemar Krone was mentioned, her emotion became apparent; she strove to hide it, indeed, but not so successfully as to evade an eye at once penetrating and fond, like that of Mrs. Kortsen. On one occasion she laid her hand on Ida's forehead, bent her head back, and looked inquiringly into the girl's eyes. Ida answered her look sadly yet bravely, and the expressive depth of the responsive glance reminded one of the sea

after a storm, when the billows heave no longer and the reflected hues begin to show again.

"Can she really have been seriously touched?" Madame Kortsen asked herself. "She is so young, at all events, that she will forget it. He will, no doubt, soon fly forth like a falcon; let him then seek a mate among the hawks and kites. Would that he may never more meet with my little dove!"

We will now let two years glide by like a dream. In this space of time we may think of the captain as attending to his official business, assisted by old Brask; while at the same time, in various modes, he tries to do good around. Mrs. Stainforth has watched over her children, whose continued health by degrees tranquilizes her soft heart, of late scared from its natural placidity by death. Aunt Lene has busied herself with shrewd plans and acts of vigorous, though quiet management; above all, with her darling Ida, whom she cherishes like a pet child, moulding her, as she fancies, in the right way. She had no guess of all that was working in Ida's heart, and that while still regarded as a girl, her darling had, by the strong emotion of her inner life, ripened into a woman.

Our young friends had driven through sleet and fog back to Ramsted; they had at length ended their school course, and become students. For Frank this was a great change; less so for Waldemar, as the young gentleman was tolerably prepared for it before going up to his examination. The chamberlain's fatherly protection was certainly an easier yoke than the constraint of school. Waldemar at first took a lively interest in student life; but by degrees, as he became at home in the great world, he removed himself more and more from his comrades. His uncle prudently imparted to him, little by little, a knowledge of the high future which awaited him, if he but took after the pattern of his race, and became a practical man of the world, as the chamberlain himself had ever been.

Life thus lay open before the young man in all its variety, with the show, the riches, the allurements, and temptation which mark it in this emphatic sense of the word; he fluttered forth into it like a butterfly in the May sunshine. For Frank, on the other hand, the world was still cold, still indifferent, and inhospitable as early spring. He read assiduously, as if, perchance, by help of some conjury in erudition, to see whether this summer existence might not open on him too; and meanwhile only spun a web of abstraction around himself, as does the insect pupa. The butterfly returned for a time to the pupa, to find if it would never become anything else more decided and more substantial; but as there were no signs of any change in that chrysalis state, the visits became constantly more rare. We shall hence in the next chapter find our hero again, under changed relations, and on a new scene.

CHAPTER II.

RUNES.

ONE fine September day, about the height of noon-tide, things were unusually still along Frederiksberg Avenue, that vista of fashionable promenade in Copenhagen. The autumn had begun with unusual heat, a drop of rain had not fallen for long, and the leaves of the trees hung limp and dusty, while gnats and flies of all sorts swarmed around, everywhere seeking victims for their blood-thirstiness. A large long-haired dog, with his tongue hanging out of his mouth, ran along the street, carefully avoided by the few foot-passengers he met; a ruddy servant-girl, with great drops of sweat on her brow, and in the bending posture which a well-filled

basket of turf occasions, slowly plodded her way homeward, where a busy kitchen-fire promised her neither cooling nor rest; there was a couple of schoolboys, who, with books slung round their necks, loitered home from school; and, lastly, an old convalescent invalid, who continually coughed, and with difficulty dragged himself from one bench to the next—these few individuals making up the entire public throughout the whole length of the Avenue.

. Not one equipage rolled by; and as regards omnibuses, the capital at that time only possessed two or three of these useful but not very elegant vehicles, whose powers of locomotion are always woefully disproportioned to their bulk. Copenhagen was at that time far behind in civilization, though it was thought to have made great progress, and in no place is the difference more striking, between the time referred to and the present day, than in the very district of our appointment with the reader. We need thus only remind him that at this time there was neither stirring railway, nor airy Tivoli, nor pleasant Alhambra; then there were several blanks in the range of houses in Vesterbro, which have now been filled up with fine buildings. The beginning of fashionable Chausseen was not a street at all; and lastly, the Avenue presented very few gentlemen's mansions, and the quaint old Kongevei none at all. The peaceful suburban fields waved with corn, or were grazed by fat cattle, and the noise of the city had not yet put an end to the rural idyl there. It is notorious that Frederiksberg was, in the beginning of Christian the Eighth's reign, very much a possession of the people of Copenhagen, for after the old king's death there was nothing to attract the gay world thither; even at that time, nevertheless, it was seldom so still as on the aforesaid warm day at noon.

The old convalescent invalid—heaven strengthen him in his toilsome walk!—now pauses outside a gentleman's dwelling in the Avenue, which then was, and yet is, one of the most inviting to behold; with its florid ornamen-

tation in the renaissance style, its trim leafy espaliers, and its elaborate balcony. The door into the balcony stands open, and gives a glimpse of rich flowers basking in the sun; there is music inside, and one of Norma's light melodies comes surging forth into the air, as if born of the scent of roses and flush of heliotropes together. This stream of fragrance and sweet sound seemed to enliven the old pedestrian; he straightened himself,—and who knows, though we cannot read his thoughts, perhaps one or another sprightly vision from his young and healthy days has been conjured up before his fancy? Again he shakes his head wistfully, and as he goes on, seems as though he would have said, "Ah, but that was *then*! 'tis over now!"

We will, however, enter with a privileged step, after due enjoyment of the charming Provence roses outside the house. The first sight that meets us in the hall is a servant in light-blue livery, with plated buttons to correspond, who sits on a chair in deepest repose, both his arms pendant, both of his solid legs stretched out wide before him. He must either have been much confused by the surprise of Morpheus, or else his education is a little deficient, for the fashionable newspaper, spread over his knee, lies upside down. There is no danger of our rousing him; but we must be more cautious in stealing past the large white spaniel and the little brown terrier, which, in perfect understanding, lie asleep on the same mat adjacent, perhaps engaged in a joint dream of the chase through the ample woods and moors of the family domain in the country.

Clearing these outposts and mounting the staircase, we come through a well-sized antechamber into a spacious, airy drawing-room, very handsomely furnished. A lady is just now the only occupant—the same to whose song we listened in the Avenue; she has scarcely risen from the piano, and stands before the mirror with her back toward us, so that without disturbing her even in thought, we may observe every reflected feature. Her attitude is careless, but not with

out grace; it only tells of the boudoir, and preserves the sense that she is quite alone.

A tiny foot, elfin-like in mould, appears from beneath the light gray dress of silk as she bends back; the perfection of her figure is displayed as her arms are raised overhead to smooth her hair and arrange a toilet which, doubtless, for coolness' sake, is somewhat out of order; showing thus somewhat more than otherwise could have appeared, of shoulders whose rounded plumpness a sculptor might have sighed to copy, and of the snow-white bust that matched them. Slightly passing an impatient hand over her dress, as if to brush the summer dust away, she turns hastily round, flings herself luxuriously on the red velvet cushions of a sofa near, then folds her hands above her head, and closes her eyes as if to sleep.

Though this passed in but an instant, we have still caught a glimpse of her eyes, large, lustrous, and of the most brilliant brown,—arch, perhaps a little mischievous. Her hair, too, is light brown, with a golden tinge, heightening her fair complexion to a marvel; the brow high and ivory-pure, the well-shaped nose marked enough to deserve the name of Roman, and though perhaps rather short, yet harmonizing all the better with fresh pouting lips and a full chin. Her figure is of the middle size, sufficiently plump, but not beyond the lines of grace. Could it be that she had really fallen asleep so soon? It might have been so, for she did not change her posture though the door opened, and two gentlemen entered her room. Of these, the taller was a young man, scarce twenty, of very handsome person, simply but tastefully attired; the other, shorter and squarer built, was apparently older by at least two or three years—which at that age tell greatly, and though he too was fashionably dressed, there was something more careless both in his garb and whole appearance.

“Plague take it!” exclaimed this last, while his light-gray eyes expressed good-humored merriment; “there *she*, too, lies wrapt in slumber! It reminds one of the

old fairy Sagas, positively! Why, counting Ajax and Gesirndt, she is the fourth sleeper we have met to-day in this house. Holla, Fransiska! Waken up, I say!"

His companion seized his arm, as if to beg him to be quiet, whether from politeness to the lady, or because he wished longer to enjoy the pretty sight. But it was too late, for she sprang up, blushing slightly as she said:

"Oh, is that you, Wilhelm Madcap? Good day, Mr. von Krone!"

"Pardon, countess," answered Waldemar, advancing with easy grace. "All was so quiet here that we thought the room had been empty."

"Tis I who should apologize," answered the countess. "If you needed excuse, you have it with you in Cousin Wilhelm. He generally takes the house as much by storm as if it contained no servants; announcement seems out of fashion with him."

"Pshaw, Fransiska! What need for such formalities between friends? Besides, for that matter, there is Christian, the fat rascal, sitting snoring down in the entrance-hall; I can hear him still! More *apropos*, though,—is uncle at home?"

"No, my father is away at Christianshavn, to look at a pair of young carriage-horses, which old Madsen, the brewer, has for sale; but he cannot now be long of returning. Pray be seated, gentlemen! Yonder is the American rocking-chair, Mr. Krone, which you lately said was such a cradle to your poetic fancy."

"It would at least, Fransiska," laughed Count Wilhelm, "if he had but a cigar in his mouth. But I suppose, fair cousin, though you *have* got the country brought into town here most wonderfully—still, ha, ha! tobacco, no doubt, remains contraband in this house!"

"And to you, Wilhelm," pursued the young countess, as if unconscious of the interruption, "to you I would recommend the sofa. For you never appear comfortable without your legs up. And what say you, in such weather, to some slices of watermelon?"

And now, by an emphatic pull of the bell by Wilhelm, the drowsy Christian was summoned. He brought the required fruit, with accompaniments, after which the young lady dispensed with his services. She herself cut the melon, and spread it on the crystal salver, glistening coolness round the welcome refreshment; then, gracefully as a Hebe, she presented it to her guests,—Count Wilhelm expressing his indignation at Krone for spoiling the delicious fruit by sprinkling it with pepper, the other persisting that this was the right method, while their fair entertainer sided by turns with either. When the melon had been consumed, the young count moved restlessly round the room, in order, as he pleaded, to look at the books and music; yet this examination seldom went deeper than the title-page, while he hummed a melody as much out of tune as possible. In his wanderings he came at last to the piano, where he pursued some eccentric musical attempts with one finger.

"Ah, *do* stop, Wilhelm!" cried the countess in a tone of despair; "that is unendurable!"

"Really, Gyldenholdt," said Waldemar Krone, stopping his own ears, "you belong to what in the schools we call the dumb creation."

"Good," said the count, turning round on the piano-stool, and regarding his cousin and his friend with a compassionate smile. "But if you only knew, on the other hand, how ludicrous your so-called arias and squalling variations appear to *me*! And you, Krone, who, to be in fashion, take singing-lessons with Signor Torre, where you bellow like two bulls! The Italian opera is really, in my opinion, the most atrociously insipid, unmusical collection of——"

"Pray, Wilhelm, spare us," said the young lady with a shrug of her fair shoulders; "talk no more nonsense to-day; you patronize perhaps the native Danish opera?"

"I chiefly patronize musical-boxes; it is fair rational music which you can understand, and besides, they never play false——"

"A bold assertion, my friend," interrupted Waldemar

Krone, "from a mouth, musically considered, so false as yours. No, Gyldenholdt, you have positively no perception of what Hertz so beautifully says—

‘From an unseen world of beauty
Issues forth the voice of song.’ ”

“Deuce take the unseen beauty! When, for example, I go to hear the band on a promenade, it is chiefly to look at the people and the pretty girls.”

The count rose up and went to the window; first he looked out into the Avenue, but, seeing it just as deserted as before, he contemplated the window-sill, which was very dusty indeed; for in those days, when the streets were not watered, the sand blew in everywhere at will. But in the dust could be traced the letters of a name, written with tolerable distinctness.

“So, so!” cried the count, “so, so! Fransiska, this must be you. So you, too, inscribe *runes* like the lady out in Frederiksberg not long ago—ha, ha, ha!”

No sooner did the countess perceive her cousin's meaning than she sprang up, rushed to the window beside him, rubbed out the name, and gave Count Wilhelm a brisk smack on the cheek, where the dust left five perceptible marks. The brightest carnation blush overspread her face and neck, and her eyes flashed; but she immediately mastered her passion, and almost with tears in her eyes she said:

“Conduct yourself at least decently, Cousin Wilhelm! There are bounds to one's patience!”

“I am truly glad,” persevered he, “that you think of him. Though, at the same time, Fransiska, I must say——”

“Not another word!” she interrupted, in a tone half beseeching, half commanding.

Count Wilhelm placed himself before the mirror, and, whistling, looked at his tingling cheek.

“Listen to me, Krone,” said he; “do you know I am at this especial moment a most enviable man. How

many of the bachelors in this city would not envy me that slap from the Countess Fransiska's sweet little hand! Groom of the Bedchamber Von Boldt, for example, or Legation Secretary Hagenfurth, not to speak of the indefatigable Baron Cederborn. He would certainly pledge himself not to wash his face so long as a grain of this precious dust remained behind on his fat cheek. Will you not at last listen to the Swedish baron, Fransiska? Though after what I saw just now on the window pane—hey? If you had not been so passionate, I should never have dreamt it meant anything."

"It did not mean anything," answered the countess impatiently.

"I shall gladly believe so, cousin!" was the serio-comic answer. "Come, now, wipe the dust off my cheek, that shall be your penance—so, all right! The melon cooled one so deliciously, and I must not argue myself into heat again. Will you come down into the summer-house, Krone, and smoke a cigar?"

"O no, Gyldenholdt, I never smoke at this hour of the day."

"Then I will go my way alone; am I not an amiable cousin, Fransiska? Don't forget to take me with you when you go away, Krone. 'Tis not impossible you may find me down in the summer-house, in a condition like that of Christian."

Waldemar had regarded the scene between the cousins with strained attention, and when Count Wilhelm was gone, he remained some moments still looking at the countess. She felt this, looked up for an instant, then cast her eyes as hastily down again. There was something in the glance of Waldemar Krone's clear brown eyes to which she, to borrow a naval phrase, was sometimes obliged to strike her colors; at other times this perhaps was pleasant to her, just now it seemed the very reverse.

"These runes on the window, countess?" asked he.

"These indiscreet questions, Mr. Krone?" answered she.

"There are moments," he said firmly, "when such questions might be quite in place."

"The present moment, however," retorted she with equal firmness, "is not such. Pray now, my dear Mr. Krone, don't be sentimental; it wearies one terribly. Rather tell me something lively! Since you must talk of runes, tell me who was the young lady in Frederiksborg gardens that Wilhelm hinted at."

"Oh, that was a trifling adventure we encountered together."

"An adventure! then let me hear it; it is really refreshing, in these dull times, to hear anything of the sort."

"As you will, then! Count Wilhelm and I were taking a walk there, when we observed a young lady seated on a bench, sunk in deep thought, while she wrote with her parasol on the sand. She neither heard nor saw us till we were close to the bench, when she suddenly rose and fled, leaving behind her six inscriptions on the path."

"Six inscriptions?"

"Yes, the same name was written there six times: *Wilhelm, Wilhelm*, and so on. You see thus, countess," continued Waldemar with a saucy ease which chased the blood up into the countess's cheeks, "that the name began with a W! The lady was quite unknown to us, and it interested me but little to learn the name of her adorer; but your cousin wished to keep an eye on her at a distance, and we soon discovered that she had again seated herself on a bench in one corner, where she seemed to be as busy as before. She scraped the sand with the parasol, and doubtless wrote, for the seventh time, *Wilhelm*. 'That girl must be desperately in love,' whispered Count Wilhelm. 'Here we may get a little fun, Krone! Let's go up to her, one on each side, so as to cut off her retreat on every quarter. When the position of the siege is established, each of us will describe a gigantic "*Wilhelm*" in the middle of the path, so that it must fall under her notice when she passes; then let us stand and watch the result.'"

"And you entered into it?" exclaimed the countess.
"O fie, Mr. Krone!"

"It was only a joke."

"And so you did not think at all of the young lady's embarrassment? Really, gentlemen are a merciless set!"

"And ladies—or rather, with permission, amiable girls—very incautious," answered Waldemar, with a side-glance at the window. "Besides, if we had been so excessively virtuous, and allowed the young lady to go on tattooing the path with the name of her lover, what would have become of our adventure?"

"Well, well! How did your martyr get over the runes you cast in her way?"

"The martyr chose first a passage in Gyldenholdt's direction; when she saw the colossal 'Wilhelm' she started, and at the same moment her eyes fell on your respected cousin himself, who stood leaning against a tree with a glass stuck in his eye. Of course she turned round and tried the other way; but think of her fright as she again met her 'Wilhelm,' and became aware of my presence. She, however, this time took courage and forced the pass; perhaps even, at least I so flatter myself, she became tranquilized by——"

"By your amiable exterior?" insinuated the countess.

"Thank you; no, I meant to say that I went quietly past her and bowed."

"That bow was a mistake, sir!"

"Undoubtedly so, your ladyship! But one generally bears himself ill with a bad conscience, and such really proved my case; for in the passing by she cast on me a look which I shall not easily forget; it was at once sorrowful and haughty, and roused a sense of shame at my thoughtless conduct. Not only was she the merest girl, but had a pair of the most charming dark-blue eyes—a color especially touching to me; nay, in their very expression there was something that reminded me of one I—whom I knew very intimately—who, I mean, was my intimate companion in childhood."

"Oh, indeed! An early attachment?"

"No, Madame Fransiska—no; you are on a wrong track, I assure you," said Waldemar seriously. "A play-fellow, I said merely—a dear associate—a friend, but a true and rare one!"

A pause ensued, to which the perfect good breeding of the young countess rather contributed than otherwise. At length, as if to prevent its becoming awkward, she inquired: "Have you seen your uncle the chamberlain lately? He is well, I trust?"

"Thank you—very well, indeed; with his velvet state dressing-gown in his great arm-chair," answered the young man, regaining his ordinary tone, "and the little pug Ami on his lap."

"Do you know, though, he is a charming old man. When ladies wish to have an idea of what true gallantry was, for it scarcely exists any longer now—when we wish to hear a compliment paid with grace, we must go to the old—to your uncle, for example."

"Pity my uncle cannot himself hear you say so!" answered Waldemar lightly.

"You are not offended on behalf of your coevals, then? you don't in the least wince at the truth of the statement? Then I shan't keep back what I now add to it! *You*, Mr. von Krone, particularly at the commencement of our acquaintance, used to be quite an exception to the rule; you had really something of the antiquated grace, I mean. But—it seems to me that you are losing it."

"Might I ask how the tendency is so marked in me?" he said, hiding a degree of annoyance.

"Oh—well—understand me as times go," she explained. "The truth is, placing you beside your fashionable contemporaries, I should still incline to approval, were there but a little less sentimentality at times."

"May I not be favored with this certificate in black and white, with your ladyship's signet appended? That would be an ornament to my book of travels," he some-

what bitterly pursued, "when I set forth ere long on foot to visit the Continent, and plod my way through, as I intend, to Rome. A traveled lady like the Countess Gyldenholdt must possess acquaintances in other countries with whom this passport would have its effect!"

"Visit the Continent on foot!—you?" she asked. "An odd idea for Herr Chamberlain von Krone's nephew and adopted son, surely? Of course you are your uncle's heir?"

"Others may perhaps have read my uncle's will," replied Waldemar; "to me he has never shown it."

"Do you know, though, Mr. von Krone, you are generally considered to be a good match?"

"Ah! in that case, if your ladyship would but have the goodness to look out for a suitable bride! Ha, ha! The report, I know, goes as you say; one hears it rather awkwardly sometimes. The other night, at the Von Kranksteins—just imagine! There was that odious old Mrs. Admiral Bernbek putting her mummy-like face close to the ear of our hostess, who is rather deaf; and as I stood by the piano, I could not well miss the words she whispered, as if on her husband's quarter-deck! 'Your Juliana is in excellent voice to-night,' croaked she; 'there is young Krone quite taken—see! A good match, I hear, a very good match!' But I must say," added Waldemar, with a slight laugh, "whether from the tone of this confidence, or its publicity, Madame von Krankstein seemed the reverse of being enraptured. She looked almost scared, I thought, and cast some very inquisitive glances in my direction thereafter."

Here Waldemar looked at his watch, and rose as if it were time to go.

"Pray sit still a little," hastily said his fair entertainer, appearing to fear she might have gone too far in this light vein. "Do sit down again; wait at least till we get back to the usual strain. No air ought to stop, you know, on a light middle note."

"There is thunder in the air to-day, countess,—at least here, in the Avenue; that is evident. My mood

wavers between the two proscribed extremes, the sentimental and the violent, neither of which can end pleasantly. Were it not best for me to go?" said Waldemar, drumming unconsciously with his fingers on the crown of his hat.

"Certainly not; but if extremes are to be allowed, let it rather be the violent one. To change the subject, though: who was that strange figure I saw with you some time ago, as I drove by, in the King's New Market, —a very big man, with a fine head; it reminded me of the antique Hercules? Though what an old-fashioned blue cloak he wore! I certainly don't recollect having before seen you in company with so ill-dressed a gentleman."

"Then you never saw any one in company with a braver man. It was the postmaster at Stromby, Captain Stainforth."

"Ah! the worthy person with whom you once lived? It is strange that you have never told me about these Stainforths, or about your residence at Stromby. Has not the captain a pretty daughter, and was she not here with him in town? It strikes me that Wilhelm talked with animation about her; he had seen her on the street, and called her 'a sweet little creature,' or some such name. Tell me all about her. It would be she of whom the beautiful young martyr's charming blue eyes reminded you? She whom you knew so well in your childhood? Now I bethink me, Mr. Krone, you must have been very early in love."

As Waldemar merely answered, with a slight blush, "Yes, it was Ida Stainforth she resembled," the countess went on:

"So you will not describe her to me? Then I can imagine what she is like, for I know Wilhelm's taste for citizen-beauties."

"There are many beauties among the aristocracy," said Waldemar, "much more citizen-like than Ida Stainforth."

"Well, not in our family, I trust," was the rejoinder.

"Listen, now, how I can hit her off: rosy cheeks, shining eyes, a well-shaped figure, but rather on a large scale, and with hands and feet decidedly too large,—for which I refer myself with confidence to the herculean father aforesaid. As regards toilet, she wears every day a self-colored stuff-frock or russet gown, which becomes her well, and is really correct in taste; but when she comes to town she flourishes in an extraordinary checkered silk, which at home only annihilates her beauty on Sundays, when the church——"

"You are unmerciful to-day, Mademoiselle von Gylденholdt," interrupted the young man with emphasis; "I should almost say, spiteful!"

"Oh, the picture comes home, then? You don't take serious offense, surely!"

"The question scarcely need be asked," replied he, biting his lips. "This irritating strain forces me to believe that you are systematically endeavoring to wound my feelings."

"Then the sketch was not faithful?"

"No,—just as remote from the truth as your manner to-day is from your own ordinary self! There must be an end to this, Countess Fransiska. I have long felt a desire to speak fairly and plainly; yes, to be honest with you."

"That is rather an alarming preface, Mr. Waldemar," said the countess.

He took out his pocket-book, where he deliberately sought for and found a thin folded piece of paper, then laid it on the table before her.

"What may this be?" she asked, with a puzzled glance at the tiny packet.

"It is only the rose you gave me a fortnight since. Shall I come to the aid of your memory? It was on our excursion to the larch-wood on the hills, in that little eastern cabinet of the hermitage, when we were alone some moments. For my part, I do not easily forget such rapturous moments! Still, the withered bud has lost its value if the gift came not from the heart; and

if there was nothing meant by the accompanying look and manner, then take back the rose!"

On the countess's handsome face were expressed by turns surprise, impatience, and resentment, too strong for words. At last she replied:

"You take everything in sheer earnest, Krone! You—you place the most serious construction on a moment's freak, and I—I——"

"I have simply asked myself this question," said Waldemar; "and I now put it to you for a reply. Can it be possible that a lady, with due self-respect at least, would speak and act as Fransiska Gyldenholdt did that afternoon in the hermitage, if there was no love in her breast?"

Countess Gyldenholdt sprang up at the bold inquiry, crossing her arms before her, as she contemplated Waldemar with a haughty indignation. Extremely beautiful was she in the midst of her anger, and the expression of defiance which played about her lips became her far better than the satiric smile which so often rested there. But straightway her excitement calmed, a painful expression overspread her features, as of listless weariness toward life and its emotions. She cast down her eyes, in thought that seemed to be far away, busied with other subjects. Hastily recovering herself, she moved aside, to pace some instants to and fro, till suddenly she again stood before Waldemar. She anxiously contemplated him as he stood there in the flush of his youthful manhood, and looked at her with a glance at once passionate and firm. Her features resumed their usual self-possession, heightened by one of those radiant glances which had so often made him giddy, as she said, in a tone which could be soft and pleading at will:

"Now, Mr. von Krone, bethink you, pray! Is there, then, nothing else to be considered in life than one's impulses, one's feelings? Need I explain myself more clearly? And yet I cannot but say, keep the rose—yes, till brighter days, if you will; *do* retain it!"

She had faltered slightly, but now offered him her

hand, which he kissed, and thereupon she hurriedly left the room.

A prey to contending emotions, the youth still felt the warmth of Fransiska's beaming gaze and the pressure of her soft hand. He triumphed at the thought of his good fortune, while yet at the same moment feeling humiliated in no slight degree. For as to those considerations, which the countess had thought it superfluous to explain more clearly, they must needs refer to her social position, which was doubtless not a little superior to his own, and must specially have regard to her father. They pointed to the obvious, but irritating fact, that "*Candidatus philosophiæ Waldemar Krone*" could not possibly be received with open arms by Arthur Count von Gyldenholdt, as the wooer of his only child, the beautiful Fransiska. The count was owner of the barony of the same name; he was possessor of the Great Cross of Dannebrog, as also of the domain of Dannebrogsmænd; and though Waldemar could have wished that the countess's inclination toward him had been strong enough to place her somewhat beyond such considerations, still he could not altogether disapprove the idea that a lady in her position should think well ere committing herself seriously. Not only had society its imperious laws, but filial duty and affection had their strong claims; she would have been less perfect, less lovable, could she have entirely overlooked her own father, and his views regarding her.

While Waldemar Krone thus measures the count's drawing-room with long strides, quite forgetting Wilhelm Gyldenholdt, who holds siesta in the summer-house, perhaps the fitting occasion arises to say a word or two about the Gyldenholdt family, and our hero's eventful acquaintance with them.

CHAPTER III.

THE GYLDENHOLDTS.

THE noble Lehnsgreve, as the head of the Gyldenholdt family preferred to be styled, had been married rather late in life. His wife had only brought him one child, his daughter Fransiska. She had not been received with gladness by her father, as he would naturally have preferred a son, and heir to the barony. When, however, his wife died, after the lapse of a year or two, and the beauty and vivacity of little Fransiska had its effect on the father's heart, his prejudice by degrees entirely disappeared, and he loved his daughter dearly; though he was still wont at times to say that she had only one fault, and that was that she had not been a boy. Nevertheless, from the very circumstance of her inability to inherit the domain, the old age of the count was filled with a pleasant activity, as he strove to secure for his daughter not merely a competency, but a splendid position. He was a rigid economist, and by investing the surplus of his great income in a profitable way during a long course of years, he had been able to purchase landed estate and amass wealth to an amount generally estimated at not less than 50,000 gilders. It was thus not without grounds when he said that at his death he should leave two baronies instead of one—the old domain to his brother's son Wilhelm, and a new patrimony to his own child.

He labored thus indefatigably for his daughter's welfare; but that for which all the treasures of this world could not compensate was the early death of his amiable and judicious wife. His sister, Baroness Louise, did indeed live with them at Gyldenholdt, and both the management of the household and the education of

Fransiska were intrusted to her charge; but this easy-tempered and delicate lady was especially ill fitted for the latter duty. The Countess Fransiska had therefore, while growing up, enjoyed an amount of liberty which had not produced the most favorable effect on her character.

To seek out a husband for his daughter that might satisfy both her requirements and his own, had, at an earlier period, much occupied the old count; but either these schemes had not succeeded to his wish, or else the youthful heiress was very difficult to satisfy; for although she was now in her three-and-twentieth year, and had been introduced to the great world six years before, yet not one of her many admirers had as yet succeeded in securing her favor. Her character for caprice and difficulty to please had frightened away substantial wooers one after another, and at the time being the Swedish Baron Cederborn was the only one whose means and whose birth justified any hopes.

To unite the countess with her cousin Count Wilhelm, and thus to keep the great fortune together, was a plan as natural as it seemed judicious. Count Wilhelm had once, in a moment of confidence, spoken of this to his friend Waldemar Krone.

"I am certain of it, Krone," said he, "that when the old man passes away, and I enter on the barony, I shall find the house as empty as if there had been an auction in it. That is to say, he will leave every stick to Fransiska that is not included in the entail. Well, the girl shall have it without a grudge! Just you keep a quiet tongue, my good Krone, and I'll trust you with a secret. It might all be mine together—if I wished! 'Tis my uncle's hobby to join Fransiska and me; but 'Thank-ye,' say I! We should only quarrel from morning till night; she has been too long in the house, and would consider herself supreme there, as certainly is the case."

"You quite forget the other side of the matter," answered Waldemar Krone, "namely, whether Fransiska would have you!"

"Ah, well," said the young count, "that she does not love me, and, in truth, as a numskull despises me—I know well; but, see you, to be countess-regnant at Gyldenholdt is no trifle—no, by my soul! not even for Fransiska. Perhaps she'd consent at last, were I to ask her; but what care I for her money? I will marry entirely to please myself, and if I choose a poor girl, and make her one of the richest ladies in Denmark, why, our household comfort won't be one whit the less, I should say, for her empty pocket beforehand."

The old Lehnsgreve had certainly at one time nourished this scheme, but it was not now the hobby that Count Wilhelm supposed. When he was certain that the young folks had no inclination toward each other he gave up the idea; being much too shrewd to force his daughter and his brother's son to such a step, or forget that the frequent unhappiness of such unions endangered their practical result.

The count's property lay in Jutland, and there he preferred to reside. At an earlier period, in company with his sister and daughter, he had paid repeated visits to foreign countries, and, specially for his sister's sake, had remained at their different watering-places. But in later years he journeyed every autumn to Copenhagen, where a month or two was usually spent for the satisfaction of Fransiska. His sister, the Baroness Louise, had however now given up traveling, and remained constantly at Gyldenholdt. She was always delicate in health, and severely taxed the skill of the family physician, Dr. Goldschmidt. No physician had been able to cure her complaint, and some of them had even prophesied her sudden death; but notwithstanding all she lived on, with apparent chance of attaining advanced age. Dr. Goldschmidt pleased her better than any former medical attendant, treating her certainly with much judgment, while he sought to remove her fancies. His skill was handsomely remunerated, but he fretted under the trial of being kept a prisoner in those remote wilds.

The baroness, however, found herself so well for the present, that, as the old count expressed it, she had given the doctor leave of absence for a week, and he had at once set off to his beloved Copenhagen.

The Lehnsgreve Gyldenholdt had two brothers, both younger than himself; the elder of them, Count Wilhelm's father, a cavalry officer, had died several years before. His widow and his daughter, the Countess Adelaide, lived in the family jointure house at Dyrland, where the old count for the most part maintained them. It was, however, his intention, in the coming spring, to lease the property of Dyrland to Count Wilhelm.

Count Wilhelm had satisfied his uncle's requirements by successfully and creditably passing the examination for a degree in arts, and after having learned farming practically, he was now spending some months in the capital in order to attend the veterinary school. He had boarded himself with his younger uncle, Count Ferdinand, who held a government appointment in Copenhagen, and kept a very pleasant house. The relations between the old count and his brother Ferdinand were not quite cordial, a circumstance which had drawn some little attention. Chamberlain Krone once asked the count's factor, Councillor Sass, about the grounds for this coldness, and Sass answered, winking one eye as he was wont to do when making any communication of a delicate nature, that "the cash-book, probably, on such a point, would supply far the most reliable information."

It was in a house belonging to Chamberlain Krone that this Count Ferdinand lived, whence originally had arisen the acquaintance between the Gyldenholdt family and Waldemar. The chamberlain had encouraged his nephew to cultivate society so desirable, and had done his part to smooth the young man's path in obtaining it. It had even been among the plans of the courtly dignitary that Count Ferdinand should rent from him some additional apartments close adjoining, so that the old count, when he was in town, might have suitable accommodation with his noble brother; but the head of

the house would on no account set up his tent in his brother Ferdinand's company, and not being partial to inns, he had on this occasion taken the embowered mansion in the Avenue, which, owing to the owner's absence, was let furnished.

Such manifestations naturally called forth Chamberlain Krone's query to the worthy Herr Sass. The truth was, Count Ferdinand's finances were always in confusion; as his portion was that of a younger brother, he found his pecuniary difficulties to be a necessary evil. Along with his amiable wife, and their three lively daughters, he indeed cherished no envious feelings toward the elder and more fortunate branch of the family; but they had no other resource than the assistance of Uncle Arthur. As, however, the critical moments more frequently occurred, the oftener did Brother Ferdinand need to receive assistance. The head of the family drew back at last, and few people better understood how to execute this manœuvre, at once without giving undue offense and leaving no room for ambiguity. Count Ferdinand from this time received only the allowance due to him, and had to be content.

The Countess Fransiska visited more frequently than her father at Uncle Ferdinand's. The three cousins were sprightly, good-humored girls, and showed the young heiress all the kindness in their power. They looked up to her, and their good-natured officiousness was indefatigable. Fransiska liked to be at Uncle Ferdinand's, and it happened now and then that the young ladies paid Chamberlain Krone a visit. The old gouty invalid then displayed all his amiability; without offending the three cousins, he contrived very obviously to give their fair relative the higher place, and the old man's practiced tact drew her favorably toward Waldemar, whose personal advantages had from the first conduced to the impression, and had struck her with all the freshness of nature. Waldemar had not failed to profit quickly by his short experience of courts and of the world; he boldly made use of his advantage here, and

it was not long till the relation between the two acquired a piquant character.

What had surprised Fransiska Gyldenholdt, and awakened a somewhat deeper interest with her for Waldemar Krone, was the discovery, that behind the polish of his ordinary mien there was concealed a fund of constitutional ardor that marked him out from the young men of the day. Its flashes of impulse, its poetic outbursts, were something new to her; and probably because he did not always show himself thus, it made a stronger impression on her flattered self-consciousness, when in her society he showed a warm animation toward the beauties of nature, when he threw off a picturesque description of some continental scene, or gave humorous sketches of what occurred around; and the language he then spoke far surpassed what she was accustomed to hear.

There was a variability in his temperament, which, at this transition period, made him interesting to her. His unaffected gladness sometimes acted on her heart like a fresh breeze of wind on the stillness of a sultry lake, given up before to mere luxurious reflections; a self-command and tact somewhat unusual for his age was at other times agreeable to her refined sentiment, until the relation had developed itself to the critical point of their recent *tête-à-tête* in the drawing-room. One of two things must happen, apparently: she must either raise him to her side, or firmly resolve to drop him from it; rather, it might be said, he must lift her to his own level, or be dragged down to hers, which latter alternative was most to be feared, partly, as the lady was some year or two his senior, partly because her birth, beauty, and riches conspired to delude his better instinct, while his uncle, the chamberlain, did not spare the most emphatic hints on the duty of "making a good match."

The reaction had already come on her part; she had begun even now to call his warm natural impulse sentimental, and the keenness of her wit took hold on the precious metal of his nature like a corroding acid. Im-

perceptibly his self-respect and his moral courage were bending like a bough on which hangs a luscious but too heavy fruit. He seldom now thought of the degree in which all that was noblest and best in his nature had been developed and strengthened by his intercourse with his friends at Stromby, and as little was he aware that when he separated from Ida the good angel of his life had quitted him.

It were unjust to say that he no longer felt warmly toward the Stainforths, and that Ida was no longer dear to him; but the world he now moved in had awakened many an uneasy and ambitious thought in his mind, till his path and theirs had, as the captain prophesied, become separate. Once or twice indeed, shortly after his Christmas visit two years before, he had written to them; but after that the communications by letter had ceased. The captain and Ida had next, during the past summer, spent a few days in Copenhagen, and seeing them again could not but gladden him. He was, moreover, astonished to find Ida so matured, with attractions that had unfolded beyond anticipation, and a simple grace of manner which befitted them. The memorable surprise of two years before was scarce deeper; but his uncle and adopted father had not received his friends with the same cordiality as he himself had done, and the meeting had therefore not the same pleasant tone as formerly. In his own mind, too, were variance and discontent, held from repose by an ambition less generous, less inspired than of old; nor was Ida far from the truth in protesting, as she obstinately did at home, that their old playmate stood in need of no improvement from worldly polish, courtly manners, or knowledge of State affairs; that, in fact, Waldemar had been quite as near perfection before leaving Stromby. Their meeting in town, indeed, left its own impression on her, to an effect requiring notice afterward. He had seemed frank and unaffected as ever toward her, yet they both showed a sense of the fact that confidential moments and days of intimacy were past.

Did the countess, then, love him? That question had always set his heart a beating; while the answer was sometimes in a thrilling affirmative, sometimes a still wilder denial. To-day, with more determination than ever, he had asked an explanation from her, and here he stood not a whit wiser than before. In his better moments he disapproved of her conduct, but at weaker seasons their mutual relation seemed to him raised above the triviality of ordinary courtships. He could thus bring himself to believe such treatment was but caused by her difficult position,—it might even be by the passionate force of her own thoughts as they conflicted. Nay, in that light, her caprice made her still more lovely, and the suspense it occasioned was so far from lessening his rapture, that it heightened under the trial.

There was a report about the Countess Fransiska which had caused Waldemar Krone great disquietude: it was somewhat spitefully rumored—of course by unsuccessful suitors—that she had once herself fallen in love, but had been unfortunate in her choice. The assertion seemed to borrow color from the circumstance of her remaining unmarried past her teens, with charms like hers, with manners so fascinating, and a disposition so noble, setting all other advantages aside. It was doubtless all a fiction of excited pique, got up to pervert the truth of her exquisite and tasteful discernment. There was some foolish story of a secret betrothal, welcomed some years before by the envious spinsters and gossiping card-tables of middle-class fashion; but it came to nothing when examined. Such marvelous additions had it received at its malicious sources, as at last to be declared a fable even in the gay world, till it sank into oblivion, except for an adorer like Waldemar.

There was one garrulous old gentleman, at an earlier period employed in subordinate offices on a foreign embassy, but now living on his little pension, and tolerated as a guest among his class, who had one evening fastened on Waldemar Krone as he went home from a party,

apparently to pounce on him as a victim for his own love of talking. Waldemar knew the old diplomatist's importunity and wearisomeness by report, but he had not yet learned the art of being blandly insolent, and thus could not shake off the old burr. He was thus entrapped into pausing at Mini's restaurant on the way, where he stayed to take a single glass of iced punch with Secretary Stolpe, deceived all the more by the ecstasies of the latter at the beauty and amiability of the Countess Fransiska. She had shone in special splendor that evening, and the secretary had really been so fortunate as to exchange a few words with her. He now rewarded the considerate patience of Mr. von Krone, and humored his unmistakable *penchant* for the lady in question,—more particularly as there was no doubt about who was to pay for what they were consuming,—by a recital of the singular narrative just referred to. Old Stolpe never guessed in what degree this narrative interested and tortured his young listener.

"I am old, and have seen something of the world, Mr. von Krone," began the secretary. "I have known so many distinguished, nay, royal personages, that you would be surprised, honored sir, if I went over them all; but it would lead us too far away. This evening I have been doubly reminded of a gentleman, belonging to one of the noblest families of France, and whom I often saw during my stay in Paris. This was the accomplished and brilliant Marquis de Beaufort, one of the handsomest men I have ever seen, as well as one of the most intellectual I have ever had the pleasure to converse with. His mother was a Russian lady of royal extraction, whom his father married when he was ambassador at Petersburg; and she, moreover, brought her husband a princely fortune. The young marquis was born in Russia, and will now be about—let me see—forty years old. In his day he had the reputation of being an absolute Don Juan, and his influence over women was indeed remarkable—astounding. 'Twas said none could resist him, and at all events he left every,

where behind him nothing but crushed hearts. At last he was himself taken, or let himself be taken, and married, in consequence of his father's wishes, a cousin; but she, I think, somewhere about a year ago, died, and he is now a widower. I know this much from his excellency the French ambassador, who often, in his morning walk on Langelinie, honors me with a short chat—hm!

"Now, will you believe it, respected sir, I was first reminded, or am still reminded of this noted French marquis by—you, and no other! On my honor, by yourself," repeated the secretary, with his most amiable smile. "In your features and in your whole bearing there is no slight resemblance to the marquis. You are a thought taller than he, I should say, and your face is more of the correct oval, but there is a very characteristic expression of the mouth which is well-nigh identical in both, and—and I positively think, that if you had lived in the world as much as the marquis, of course going through the same military and diplomatic school, then—then—you may think I flatter, but my conviction is, you might then compare most favorably with his lordship!

"What is most remarkable, however," relentlessly pressed on the old gossip—"and this evening, when I saw you along with the countess, I thought of it often—is the odd coincidence that she was once very near becoming Marquise de Beaufort. You start," pursued he, quite delighted at the effect produced. "Well, it *does* sound romantic perhaps, and hence you may doubt it, but it is none the less true! There are invidious simpletons, untrained to life in the great world, especially among the young, who may ridicule my knowledge of affairs; they will stare, positively stare, at the idea of any one having enjoyed such distinguished acquaintances. But I am far from reckoning you, Mr. von Krone, among this schoolboy rabble; and you may rely upon it, in matters involving delicacy, that I am correctly informed."

The secretary here took a gulp of his punch, offered his companion a pinch of snuff from the well-known gold box, himself took one with relish, and carefully brushed the collar of his coat, as if to prolong the enjoyment of telling his story, and of having an attentive listener,—in truth a rare luxury for Secretary Stolpe.

“You know, without doubt, respected sir, that Count Gyldenholdt, that is to say, the Lehnsgreve, some years ago left this country with his sister and daughter; indeed, he has been abroad several times; but I speak here of the first journey, when they went to Baden—to Baden. They came also that summer to Paris, where I saw them. Ah, Mr. von Krone! you should have seen the countess in her eighteenth year! She is charming still, certainly,—but ah, that youthful freshness, that maidenly bashfulness and *mauvaise honte*, as they say yonder—in short, seventeen never comes back again! She was extremely lovely, and her beauty is, and was then especially, of a piquant description. She was quite irresistible, I can assure you, Mr. von Krone; believe it or not, my old heart used to beat like a clock on seeing her, the angel!” and with that the secretary absolutely cast a kiss off his finger-points out into the air.

“Now, the Marquis de Beaufort being also at that juncture in Baden-Baden, saw the countess, and fell violently in love with her. In a word, he was then for the first time seriously smitten, and ’twas said that heaven and earth, that is to say, Monsieur Papa, Madame la Mère, and a whole council of aristocratic aunts and uncles, had been moved in order to keep him in mind that in his fourteenth year he had been *fiancé* to his well-endowed cousin, who at the time had been only two years old. He had, it was true, paid no subsequent attention to her—a matter of no consequence in France,—and was well enough satisfied that her delicate health delayed the marriage to her three-and-twentieth and his own five-and-thirtieth year. He had more than once alleged this early betrothal as an excuse for withdrawing rash pledges of affection given since

but now he evidently wished both the betrothal and cousin at the—at Hong-Kong. Unfortunately the said *fiancée* had somewhat improved in health in the course of the previous year, and during the family storm which the marquis's attachment to the Countess Gyldenholdt awakened, the marriage was fixed for that very autumn. Important pecuniary questions depended on this union, and the marquis could not escape.

“The Gyldenholdts, however, during a whole month knew nothing of these circumstances; the old count seemed to approve the addresses paid to his daughter by the rich and distinguished Frenchman, and the poor child was, if possible, more in love than the marquis. The relation was at all events very intimate indeed, and it is insisted that some of the most binding preliminaries had even taken place in private, when all at once the marquis's distinguished mother fell like a bombshell on Baden-Baden. As the story goes, though for some of its details I cannot just vouch, madame overtook her son on the public promenade, where he was walking with the countess and her father. She minutely surveyed the two latter, in a style only suitable to a couple of designing fortune-hunters, and uttered some very stinging remarks on the whole affair to her son; at any rate, it is certain that she carried him bodily off with her. In short, the engagement with Countess Fransiska was abruptly at an end, and the ardent suitor fell back into the clutches of his affectionate friends.

“Whether or not, however, a hope of ultimate union between the two lovers was kept alive by the fact of Madame la Marquise's advanced age, and the weakly health of the betrothed young lady, unquestionable it is that a correspondence was in some way maintained for a time, probably without the knowledge of the proud old count. Though I dare not name the source of my information, you may, respected sir, as I said before, rest certain that I am correct where I guarantee a statement. It would now seem, nevertheless, that the Marquis de Beaufort has finally forgotten the *grande passion*

of his life, just as he has forgotten dozens of minor ones; for he has been above a year a widower, without the slightest demonstration on his part. Such behavior, in the circumstances, speaks volumes. I regard the young lady as having been at no time compromised by engagements formed *d'une mariage supposée*, observe, and as being now doubly free. The allegations of gossip on the point are mere *canards*, look you, deserving no attention whatever!

"But, as I said before, when to-day I saw you stand by the side of the Countess Fransiska, the whole story came back on me, on account of your striking resemblance to the Marquis François de Beaufort, and I said to myself,—for you must know that I still almost always think in French, though precluded now from often speaking that most expressive of languages,—‘Ah! voilà—c’est notre François beau et fort qui est un peu tardement venu chercher sa jolie petite Fransiske!’ He, he, he! Not so bad, excuse me, if you observe the slight *double-entente* there?”

With that the officious ex-secretary rose up and gave his young friend an encouraging slap on the shoulder, as he mechanically followed.

The unhappy Waldemar Krone escaped from this wretched old Stolpe’s polite prattle only to go home overwhelmed and sickened to the heart. What should he believe of this narrative—the detestable narrative, with its specious circumstantiality of mingled scandal and fair words? That Stolpe was a fool and a braggart, who set many romances together with year and date, this he knew well; but he had at the same time heard it allowed that the old gentleman’s part in the great world had formerly not been so subordinate as from his present position one might believe. Stolpe had at one time been well off, though of plebeian birth. Urged by vanity, and drawn forward by patronage, he had succeeded in becoming, at a very early age, a diplomatic employé. He got giddy on beholding his highest desires so quickly fulfilled. He was received in the outer circle

of those whom he regarded as the gods of this world, and all his endeavor became to emulate their conduct; but the attempt failed in the long-run. The dignitaries of the state-Olympus only thought of using young Stolpe for their lower ends. His higher aspirations were their laughing-stock in private; and, in short, one fine day Stolpe found that his experience had become obsolete in statesmanship; the times were new, European politics demanded fresh views,—without his having risen one step on the ladder. It ended by his being shelved with a small pension. Landed at the bottom, shorn of his original means, scantily provided for, and full of regrets, he returned to private life, existing in the greatness of the past, and still able only to secure for himself a narrow place at fashionable tables. Some of the friends who in their time had helped him to dissipate his patrimony, and who were now in high positions, either in possession of great offices, or of the property to which they had formerly been only the heirs, did not quite turn their backs on Stolpe. He was, in truth, barely tolerated; but still he had been mixed up with the great, and had really played a part, however accessory, among the men of whose acquaintance he now boasted; lastly, he possessed an excellent memory, and when he lied, it was from old habit, and not from any lack of material for tales of the past.

This sketch of Stolpe's character came substantially from the source of Chamberlain Krone's knowledge, and there was no reason why the man might not really be, as he himself said, "correctly informed." His tale was given in such a tone of certainty, that Waldemar could not but fear that in substance it was true. On confiding the matter to his uncle, the old courtier dismissed it with the remark that he had indeed heard something of the sort, but that he could not give much credit to it, and that Stolpe, except where the test of documents was concerned, must be looked upon as an authority no greater than the public at large. Next Waldemar mentioned it to his friend Count Wilhelm; whereat the count responded by a careless laugh, as he said:

"So the story has come your length at last, has it? In truth, Krone, I know no more about the matter than yourself. It is perhaps suspicious that both my uncle and Fransiska are chary of all allusions to that sojourn at Baden, however much my fair coz may say of other tours. Something unpleasant *must* have occurred there, I should say, if it did not go quite so far as Stolpe relates—old twaddler that he is! But it is just like Fransiska to fall in love with a self-sufficient French coxcomb like that Parisian marquis."

Waldemar had thus got no great comfort, and the whole story flashed athwart him on this critical day to increase his torment. Still, though all were true, no accusation of misconduct was involved; the obstacle belonged to time past, and at the present moment there was a worse one in Fransiska's noble father. The old count's pride appeared to be indeed a most impregnable barrier; he was not, to be sure, in the usual acceptation of the word, a vain man, and he did not much pique himself on those distinctions which accident had accorded him, but he was prouder of his blood than any prince of the realm. Waldemar Krone had come by degrees to be a well-received guest in the Avenue, but the count had undoubtedly no suspicion of the nature of these cherished relations with the Countess Fransiska. Waldemar had behaved most judiciously toward the old nobleman; while showing him all due respect, he was not too deferential or subservient; for nothing made the count so distrustful as anything thus savoring of the obtrusive. When the subject of conversation interested him, he entered into it with all in general; but when sought in any way apart, with the air of intimate confidence, then he was apt to draw formally back within the intrenchments of punctilio, so to speak; whence certainly one was made to feel his distance. Waldemar had often marked this, but yet—why linger, truly, over obstacles and difficulties in the path that roused his manhood? Before love nothing was impossible; he loved, and would conquer! In imagination he pictured to himself the

success within reach; the future was at that moment holding out its brightest rose-tints, when suddenly he heard behind him a short, dry, emphatic cough.

"Ahem—ahem—ah! Herr von Krone?" asked the old count, with a gleam of his falcon-brown eye. "Are you quite alone here, then, young gentleman?"

So rapid the transition from reverie to fact, that the Lehnsgrave's abrupt appearance put our young dreamer quite out of countenance. It was not usual for him to be easily disconcerted, but for this time he blushed deeply, and cut a somewhat awkward figure, as he bowed in reply:

"Alone! oh no, count," he said; "not for long,—that is, I have but just parted from the countess, and my friend Herr Wilhelm is in the garden. He came here with me; I was on my way back to seek him, sir."

"Ah! then," answered the count, glancing out of the window, "there he comes in turn to seek *you*!"

He might probably think that, for one just going off to the garden, young Krone had stood singularly close-nailed to the floor by the piano.

"Who is this he brings with him, though?" continued Count von Gyldenholdt, looking down the garden-walk. "Surely our own good Dr. Goldschmidt, not gone home yet? Yes.—Good day, Dr. Goldschmidt! Soh! still here about town, doctor?"

"As your lordship sees, I am still so fortunate."

"You will certainly get a lecture from my sister when you get back;—two whole days beyond the term of leave—two entire days," said the count, in that half-jesting, half-serious tone at times indulged by great men about a trifle, and which is all the more disagreeable to those concerned, because the joke seems difficult to perceive. It evidently annoyed the doctor, who set up for an independent man; and who, before he quitted Copenhagen to reside at Gyldenholdt as a medical practitioner, had gained no small name in private political assemblies for his liberal views—a renown more easily earned than maintained through a course of years. The doctor was, however, philosophical, and he helped himself by a

professional jest, where another might have been disconcerted.

"The baroness will forgive me that, Lehnsgreve," said he with extreme gravity, "as I bring home an entirely new medicine for her case; and I hope that, being a living one, it will prove truly life-giving!"

"Hey! a living one—a live medicine, say you?" inquired his patron, graciously meeting the doctor's humor. "Nay, what do they not hit upon nowadays! But what in the world do you mean, doctor? I must exercise my authority beforehand, I see, and look into the matter."

"Your excellency must not forget," was the answer, "that in the *leech* we possess one of our most valuable resources, and in the present case the recipe is neither more nor less than a new zoological rarity from England, a charming pet, in the shape of a furry little lap-dog. Not only is he capable of the sprightliest tricks, but above all, has been trained to lie on the feet of his mistress; and much as the baroness needs enlivenment of spirits, I can assure your greveship she suffers still more through chillness in the aforesaid region. I anticipate great things, sir, from the prescription!"

"Hm—ah—so, soh!" half laughed the old count, as if in his turn scarce considering the theme a proper one for mirth. "Well, when do you really leave, then, doctor?"

"To-night, most indubitably; and I am come to request your lordship's last commissions."

"Well, God be with thee. Tell my sister we shall be with her in about a fortnight."

The whimsical doctor stood wonderfully high in his patron's good graces, but he knew that the old gentleman disliked long visits, especially about dinner-time. He therefore took leave, and went into town, in company with Count Wilhelm and Waldemar.

"What a confounded fancy this of uncle's, to live out here in this remote corner!" groaned Count Wilhelm, taking off his hat, and fanning himself with his pocket-

handkerchief. "Now, here must I trudge off at four o'clock in the very opposite direction, to Ameliegad, for if I don't come to dinner, sour looks are the order of next day."

"Your uncle's tastes, count," said the doctor, "are those of the true nobility—they like the country; they'd rather hear the lark sing than the mouse squeak, you know."

"So do I, too, doctor," said Count Wilhelm, laughing—"that is to say, when I am in the country; but in town one prefers to be there in earnest."

"Yes, yes, *who'd* not pray to be so always?" echoed the medical man vehemently. "How little did I once think ever to leave the fortunate spot! I am a true Copenhagenener, gentlemen, and my heart pines away yonder in Jutland."

"Still, you get on well enough with us," said the count, "and truth to tell, old Gyldenholdt seems every way else to agree with you. Why, my good sir, leaving more solid advantages aside, I have to compliment you on your improved looks."

Along with this tribute to his unquestionably well-conditioned appearance, there was a tone of condescension, if not of satirical reference to the past, which might a little have galled the worthy man.

"I am not one of those, Count Wilhelm," answered he pointedly, "who say, *Ubi bene, ibi patria*. Copenhagen is my paradise—true; but I had once a national, a patriotic enjoyment of it. This life on the streets, these little meetings with friends, this choice of society, the theater, these little dinner parties at a good hotel,—these are not all, see you! One may come and have a snatch at them, or one may even revel, and I may say wallow in them like a young porpoise in a fiord—but there is something wanting still."

"Oh, true! A good reliable table and a cellar to back it," said young Von Gyldenholdt, with something like a sneer, aside to his friend. "Well, if not always in Copenhagen, you still have these, doctor, with a most unexceptionable outfit besides."

His eye ran over the excellent physician's glossy suit, ending with the heavy seal and chain of the ponderous gold watch, by which he had timed the nearest clock some moments ago.

"In this disappointing world we cannot have quite everything," concluded Wilhelm maliciously.

The doctor was too much engrossed with all around him to notice the irony.

"Right, young Herr," sighed he. "Unfortunately, too true! Enjoyment is affected by so many things—the associations, the mere locality. At Gyldenholdt, for example, you see a pretty girl at a time; but, pshaw! you know all about her, she knows too much about *you*. If not absolutely a milkmaid, still this rustic environment makes all the difference—how unlike the feeling amid town! Such a background to it, such a flood of possibilities, such a degree of freedom and stir!"

"Gracious, Goldschmidt!" exclaimed the young count. "My Aunt Louise should hear you speak so! You amaze me! You are a great epicure, doctor; that is to say, a man who knows how to enjoy life." He inclined to regard the doctor as a good fellow after all, while Waldemar could not help smiling.

"Oh, at Gyldenholdt," replied Dr. Goldschmidt, "there is no fear. I am there somber as an anatomist. 'Tis the old touch of these pavements that revives one. Just see that charming blonde yonder, in her crape mourning! How it becomes her! Does she live up that street, I wonder, where she went just now? Well, no matter, gentlemen," he apologized; "I will not waste your time, and there are other chances in plenty, but I enjoy such sights!"

"The fact is," said Count Wilhelm, "our worthy friend's good taste gets the better of him always. At home there are but the good things of the table to produce the gourmand; *here*, however, doctor, you really rise to the refinement of the epicure. Enjoy life, said you—why, you pour nectar all round it!"

"I am truly obliged to you, count," bowed the doc-

tor, "for so mild an interpretation. Epicure?—ah, that is to say I am past being more. Hm!—there comes, then, a greater epicure than I."

"Ha, the Swede? Yes!" muttered Waldemar, starting back. "That flaxen-haired colossus, Baron Cederborn."

It was indeed the baron, as he sauntered a little pompously in the direction they had come, toward Fredriksberg Avenue, where his devout homage was periodically laid before Fransiska. After having exchanged a few words with young Von Gyldenholdt, he politely saluted the two other gentlemen and moved on his way.

"I should like to know what in particular you have against him, Krone," said Count Wilhelm archly. "He is an extremely pleasant man, the most unquestionable of cavaliers in ladies' society, the most liberal in all others, always polite, and always in good humor."

"Still, if I may venture to draw any conclusions from having spent a single evening in his company," said the doctor, "I should reckon him among those who, with Fredman, would say:

'Wine, to my thinking,
Leaves love far behind!
For one joy thrust from mind,
Return twenty in drinking!'"

"That may mislead you, doctor!" smiled Wilhelm. "He is still successful with the ladies; what think you, Krone?"

"I am of Dr. Goldschmidt's opinion. The baron is a tolerable actor—magnificent on the stage, or rather, I should say, on the floor of an amphitheater or circus, but I don't relish him behind the scenes. A coarser companion could not well be, and he prides himself on drinking Russian brandy, without flinching, from a hock-glass. I cannot endure a middle-aged debauchee."

"I look up to your offended virtue, my Krone; and yet not long since you drank champagne out of a lampshade! Yes, doctor, you should have seen this most

moral of young sages! But this is always the way with Krone; the follies of the preceding evening do no harm to his dignity next morning, and he has a very short memory for his own sins."

"A happy gift," said the doctor. "Look, there goes the hero of the day, the great Thorvald, with Signor Rossi. Did I tell you that I lately, at the hotel, made the acquaintance of this bird of song? He seems to me to be a fine jolly specimen of the——"

"Can you explain to me, Goldschmidt," interrupted Count Wilhelm, with heat, "what the ladies are so taken with in this Rossi? It is really a riddle to me why our beauties run after this crook-legged Italian."

"Ha, ha, Gyldenholdt!" laughed Waldemar, "you cannot, it seems, forget that he lately cut you out with little Mademoiselle Agnes. It is simple enough of you. It is the rage just now to have talked with Rossi, and I should therefore never be offended at a lady if she, when occasion offered, preferred Rossi's society for a few moments to mine."

"You are sufficiently liberal in other people's love-affairs, I see, but remember your own remarks on Cederborn. Ah, did you see her, that little Barwitz, there on the opposite side-path?"

"Who is little Barwitz?" asked their companion.

"The lady there in the blue gauze dress."

"She is very careful of her clothes," remarked the doctor, with the air of a connoisseur; "she lifts her dress unusually high."

"That is the mode at present," was the reply; "and it is at any rate a sensible fashion."

"Now, count," corrected the sprightly physician, "it can at no time suit all ankles, you know."

"But Miss Barwitz's most assuredly. She is an admirable partner at a ball."

"I should go as far as to say," put in Waldemar, "she is the girl best worth dancing with in all the town—good-natured, lively, and unaffected. But far better than that still, Gyldenholdt, I consider her to be a pure-minded, innocent girl."

"There you may risk, then, an honorable ambition," said Count Wilhelm, while his notice shifted to another young lady, whose faultless toilet and classical perfection of feature drew their attention.

"Yes," said Waldemar, as they bowed to her in passing; "that is unquestionably one of the fairest faces we meet, and one of the most captivating."

"Clara Essen is too dismally correct and prudish for me, Krone; I can never give a loose rein to my humor in her presence."

"All the better for yourself, my friend, to practice a little restraint. There is no real prudery about Clara; she is not cold, but she certainly does not allow so much freedom as Kathinka Barwitz. It vexes me, do you know, Gyldenholdt, to see you practice on that pretty simpleton's good humor, whispering such absurdities into her ear—rather strong ones now and then, I suspect."

"My friend Krone imagines himself a pattern of virtue, doctor, and—that is to say, at times he fancies so—and thus takes me to task like a mentor. Respect virtue; but at a ball that were rather too tedious."

"We men of the world are doubtless hard to satisfy," said the doctor. "The giddy girls are those we run after, and many an engagement takes its key from the jingle of flutes and violins; but when both parties are in the snare, betrothed and wedded, we then demand that our wives should change themselves into patterns of virtue."

During this conversation, often interrupted by bows and passing exchange of compliments, the three gentlemen had reached Amager Market, and at the same moment the king and queen drove by. Of course they remained standing in due form, to show their loyal respect, and thereafter the doctor exclaimed:

"Upon my honor, they are a handsome royal pair!"

"What, doctor!" laughed the young count, "I thought that you belonged—I had almost said to the number of Christian the Eighth's personal adversaries. I have heard you at times speak vehemently against his government at our Jutland card parties!"

"Well, well, count! we have all been young once, and—besides, when one lives in the provinces, and comes but for his yearly holiday at the capital, he grows good-natured there. He gets rusticated, in short. Just in the same way as it cheers me to see the town itself once more, so it pleases me too to see their majesties in health and prosperity."

"It is questionable, my good sir, if his majesty would be satisfied with this very conditioned loyalty. On that principle, we might take off our hats to the devil himself; and the truth is, if one has such demagogues to rule over as——"

"Unquestionably, I would far rather be Count of Gyldenholdt," hastily interrupted the other, lest his former liberal opinions should be raked up. "By-the-way, I know where some excellent cigars can be had, and if you, gentlemen, will only come with me a little way down East Street, I shall have your opinion of them."

Accordingly, on reaching a rather obscure cigar-shop, Krone and Gyldenholdt were agreeably surprised to find a handsome black-eyed young lady behind the counter, and a conversation ensued, which, if only for the credit of the gentlemen and the pretty Therese, is as well unrecorded. It must be owned that Waldemar Krone did not then show himself such a pattern of virtue as might have been expected from his previous tone. Those around him, even his old uncle not excepted, often repeated a maxim, which sounds so pleasant in young ears, and which is so lightly uttered as to seem no less innocent than inevitable, that "every one must get his wild-oats sown." Experience shows that many men never succeed in this achievement, and if Waldemar Krone was more fortunate when spring-time ended, he was less indebted for this to himself than to the higher influence that shapes our life. Even he seemed to entertain the prejudice in regard to a "lady" who stands behind a counter, that she has no claim to be treated with a woman's respect.

"Ha, ha!" laughed the doctor, when they were again on the street. "You were a little too bad there, though, count! 'Twas almost too severe! Why, used as she must be to it, you positively made the poor girl stand quite abashed. As I so often have said, my college chum at Hamburg will keep his ducat in his pocket to the end of time. That is to say, there is a doctor of my acquaintance at Hamburg who has kept the same *louis d'or* twenty years in his purse, under a vow to give it to the poor on what might be thought very easy terms, to wit, the first time he has been in the company of modern gentlemen without hearing in the course of their conversation any honest word made victim to the loose old heathen goddess Venus!"

The doctor thus succeeded in his favorite manœuvre, namely, to take leave with a witticism on his lips, and, if possible, go off like the Parthians, lodging a shaft between the armor-joints. The three men went on their several ways: the doctor to conclude his visit to the capital with a *recherché* dinner at Vincent's, where he was expected by a couple of intimate friends, now chosen rather for their acquaintance with the quality of wine than their understanding of politics; Gyldenholdt to have a short siesta at Uncle Ferdinand's, and thereafter to betake himself to the Avenue on miscellaneous service as a liegeman; lastly, our hero, in order to arrange and beautify his youthful head at Allibert's hair-dressing saloon, and there to hear that polite Frenchman declare, in the French tongue, that Monsieur de Krone's hair, in color, texture, tournure, and profusion, was the finest he had ever passed between his hands. Thereafter he was going home to Amalie Street, to enliven with his presence his uncle's secluded mid-day meal, where matters awaited him that require a fresh chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

A PRIVATE CONFERENCE.

WHILE some men are roughly jostled about on their way from the cradle to the grave, like vessels subject to the caprice of wind and tide, there are others whose whole life runs on as if in grooves prepared for its motion; they proceed year after year from one easy track to another, and this regularity seems to preserve them well against the effect of time, but when inevitable change at length comes, it is felt all the more sensibly.

Thus had things gone with Chamberlain Krone. After he had been for several years chancery clerk in the Foreign Department—at that time a more distinguished office than it is now—he was at last appointed secretary; but he held that situation only a month, as the department got another chief, distinguished by a reforming genius, and a perfect overturn in the management ensued. A perfectly novel occurrence in those times, it created some sensation in the precincts of State; but in so far as Fritz Krone was concerned, a balsam was laid on his wound by his immediate elevation to be chamberlain, as the only mode of convenient removal. With the order of Dannebrog, the cross of a knight, and one or two German orders, he thus retired into private life. People said, plausibly enough, that he owed the two last distinctions to the anxiety of his old superiors to put a seal on his lips, and the two first, to their official incompetency; but as he was not shown to have neglected the duties which rested on him, and these tokens of honor ennobled him in his own eyes, he thought he might wear his orders and his cross as proudly as any man in the land; which indeed was his behavior in the case.

Though the chamberlain had thus not played any important part in the diplomatic world, it would be a great mistake to deny him all influence and consideration. In the social world he had always been a prominent figure, as he possessed a cultivated taste, an intimate acquaintance with the use and wont at court, and was a master of etiquette in high establishments, along with thorough erudition in the historical precedents of costume and ceremony. He was still well looked on at court, was the favorite of the ladies, and owner of considerable property; so that if singly the ounces of his consideration did not weigh as was requisite, altogether they made up the full pound of the balance. He became in his old days, perhaps more than he had ever been before, the favorite of the world, and its oracle in questions of taste; nay, when the gout at last fettered him to his arm-chair, he now and then obtained the honor of being consulted on nice points even of diplomacy, quite privately, to be sure, but by persons of the highest standing; at least such was the report. What, other than a great man, was he thus toward the close? He was, surely, however remote, still one of those fixed stars of the great world, round which the planetary satellites move themselves. How many applied to him with even freer increase of confidence, to be helped to the right in this or that case of delicacy? *Whose* mediation was everywhere so well received as that of old Chamberlain Krone? or who understood how "to arrange" everything as he did?

This arranging was indeed his passion, and he managed in this style to obtain from all he met in life, whether of joy or sorrow, the advantage of ceaseless occupation. He was, in his way, a true epicurean philosopher, and the children of the world felt themselves irresistibly drawn toward him, for it was soothing to conventional minds to feel how the chamberlain could pluck the thorn from every serious event, and classify it among the flowers; nay, if need be, how the essence and articulation of an affair entirely disappeared at his touch, till

only the desirable *arrangement* in his portfolio was looked for. Life's significance, about which the pulpit speaks, about which books instruct us, and the voice of conscience within us whispers, seemed then, to these willing disciples in the chamberlain's school, only the supposition of an excited fancy, and life itself was but a matter to be becomingly conducted, a ceremony to be correctly and pleasantly carried through.

The chamberlain was nevertheless a good economist, and in this particular he had a faithful and talented assistant in his old servant Hans. It was to the joint honor of master and servant that the latter had served the former during five and twenty years; a clear evidence of good sense and forbearance on both sides. Hans was perfectly honest, and looked after his master's interest with so much fidelity and prudence, that the reader may be sure he was a Jutlander. Although he had good opportunities of enriching himself, he punctually accounted for every halfpenny intrusted to him; and during several years never once asked for the raising of his wages. As he was now evidently quite indispensable to the chamberlain, the other servants upbraided him with his folly in this respect; but Hans smiled so diplomatically at these reproaches, that his friends thought that he found his advantage in some way or other. The fact was, however, that Hans's integrity and care came by natural inclination, while at the same time he felt persuaded that when one serves a particular but rich master who has no family, it pays best to remain so. The chamberlain was ten years older than Hans, and the attainment of a small legacy seemed more than probable on his behalf, or, if he died, for the benefit of his heirs.

Hans had, moreover, contrived, about five years before, even during the lifetime of the chamberlain, to get his condition improved. In a well-chosen moment he made an attack, and gained a diplomatic victory over his master. It was, in truth, a critical moment in the chamberlain's life, when Hans, one morning at the toilet,

declared, respectfully but firmly, it was his intention on an early day to lead to the altar his old flame Jane, the attendant of Admiral Bernbrek's lady. The chamberlain was taken at a disadvantage by this sudden assault; and when all objections were in vain, contrary to his custom he got into a passion, and upbraided Hans for the blackest ingratitude. The chamberlain had often declared that he would never have married servants about him, and thus Hans's declaration was tantamount to a resignation of his service.

Yet how could the old gentleman possibly dispense with the attendance in question—with Hans, who had served him during five and twenty years without interruption, and now knew all his habits to a turn? This the worthy valet had counted on, and he was therefore inexorable. To all that the chamberlain represented to him about increase of wages, or about the withering of Miss Jane Petersen's attractions, the questionable reality of her ringlets, and the undoubted contentiousness of her temper, Hans opposed the steady avowal that he had now pledged his word to the good woman; and next he begged the chamberlain to consider that his boy was now fifteen years old, so that it was time that he was made the son of decent people; the poor lad naturally could not be expected, at his confirmation, to like standing up in church as a mere love-child! Finally, he assured his master that he would much prefer to remain in his service even when married, but if the chamberlain would on no account agree to this, he was not afraid to start a small retail business, or modest public-house, and both he and Jane had saved from their wages a tolerable sum for this end.

The chamberlain knew his valet's talents too well to doubt his courage to undertake anything; indeed, Hans ran as little risk of dying from hunger by being left to his own resources, as a fish of being drowned by being cast into the water. Then the chamberlain begged a closer explanation of the terms on which Hans had imagined it practically feasible to remain in his service.

when married. After some consideration, and with much circumlocution, Hans then allowed the chicken to creep out of the egg which he had long sat upon: the place of porter would be vacant in October, and as the chamberlain could not do without a porter in his establishment, he proposed that Jane should move into the sunk floor, to discharge this function. Their son Niels would help her mind the door, while Hans himself would continue as before to wait on the chamberlain. Jane could at the same time superintend the kitchen, which was on the same story; and he warranted her to undertake generally all that could be expected of a woman with her qualifications, if only paid the same wages as with the admiral's lady. The housemaid might thus be parted with, and her wages saved. Finally, Hans fell into rapture over the innumerable conveniences of a plan which, as he said, had flashed upon him in one moment. The chamberlain remarked, justly enough, that the whole arrangement, considering how suddenly it had occurred to Hans, was remarkably well thought out in its minutest points; but he should require a day or two for reflection over it. At the end of this stipulated period, he gave in unconditionally, if not with the best grace. He had expected that Hans would show himself very grateful, but to his great surprise the faithful servant only declared that, although he anticipated and acknowledged the small benefits accruing to himself, yet the whole change was far more for the chamberlain's own interest, and his honor ought to see that there was no ground whatever for vexation. However this might be, still the chamberlain had found from that day, while perhaps enjoying an increase of material comfort, that he was no longer absolute master in his own house; in addition to which came the somewhat dubious advantage, that Hans bestowed on him more and more of the confidence associated with paternal duty or married life.

Chamberlain Krone was, of course, a conservative on all questions, great or small. His attachment to the Royal House was unbounded, and his loyalty, had it

been put to an actual test, would undoubtedly have sustained it; since existence itself, to him, was bound up with the validity of Court and King. He piqued himself on the boast that both people and things grew old in his employment, and was fond of telling how many years ago he bought the blue and gold china set; with what pains he had procured his valuable sable fur; and from what side of his family had descended to him a certain silver table-service, reserved for great occasions. On such points it was the invaluable merit of his valet, Hans, that however much the latter might know, he preserved a discreet silence, or still more discreetly coincided with remarks. It had been said by some, for instance, that the silver plate bore arms of too late a date for the chamberlain's great-grandfather; nay, in his earlier career his own nobility of descent had been questioned; but all controversy in this respect was long ago at an end, and he could now, without the slightest opposition, talk about his venerated progenitor, a Swedish noble of dilapidated estate, who had married a rich Polish lady.

The chamberlain was no lover of children, and therefore he had intrusted the education of his brother's son to others, though it was by no means indifferent to him in what spirit the boy was trained. His aristocratic ideas in this respect had in their time given occasion to small contests with the good captain at Stromby, who honestly opposed him, and was therefore by no means in favor. The chamberlain trusted that he should himself be able, however, to efface the plebeian impressions which his nephew had received at the postmaster's house. He became attached to the boy by degrees, as Waldemar grew up and justified his care. There was but one point on which they disagreed, namely, about Waldemar's regard for his friends at Stromby.

We now betake ourselves to Amalie Street, and enter the chamberlain's dining-room. Hans has brought in the dessert, and thereafter, according to old custom, quitted his post from the sideboard, while uncle and

nephew sit opposite each other, still talking of matters indifferent to the point which was most at heart. From commendation of Mistress Jane's excellent confectionery, the old man passed on to admit that he could nowadays scarcely do it justice, if even still capable of appreciating the best vintages of the Continent. The young man, as at his age and in his case was due, warmly qualified this tone of remark, putting in the expression of some earnest good wishes for his uncle's continued health and comfort.

"I have, on the whole, been lucky with Hans and his marriage," said the chamberlain musingly; "but Hans is now sixty, and will soon be too old to do much. He will scarcely continue in service when I am gone; and therefore, Waldemar, I would recommend the son, Niels, to you. He is certainly a smart lad, and his father seems to expect—yes, old Hans has a shrewd headpiece of his own—seems to expect that you, nephew, are a fixture here!"

This dry mode of reference was truly characteristic, and a rather embarrassing pause ensued.

"Where have you been to-day?" resumed the chamberlain in his usual tone.

"With the young count, sir, to call in the Avenue," said Waldemar. "There, by-the-way, I made the acquaintance of the doctor from Gyldenholdt—Dr. Goldschmidt."

"A clever, rising man he is too," was the answer, "and I hear Gyldenholdt has improved him not a little. He has some influence with the count, I believe?"

"I found him very pleasant; one does not soon weary in his company."

"Did you see the young countess there?"

"Oh—certainly—yes, sir, I did. She was quite full of your praises."

"The little flatterer! She returns them with interest, does she, behind-backs?" And the old gentleman endeavored to hide his satisfaction by a jocose air. "Well knowing—hey—Waldemar! how to pay court delicately

to monsieur the nephew? That is a pearl worth winning, though, my lad! In all my experience, I recollect but one single lady to surpass her personally, and in the grace of manner even that lady scarce excelled her. I mean, of course, the *je-ne-sçais-quoi* that belongs to the nobly-born alone; the art which in a less distinguished position would be offensive: that mingling, in short, of *espièglerie* and *hauteur* which becomes aristocratic loveliness so well!"

The only lady in question, thus cited from his own early days, was of course the renowned Baroness Sophie Stjernholm, a paragon rendered almost tedious, if that could be, through his authoritative description. He was wont to dilate, with an enthusiasm seldom complimentary to the living, on the fascinations of her vanished beauty and the radiance of her long-obsolete toilet, as beheld amid numerous pomps of yore,—above all, at the coronation of Frederick the Seventh.

"I should not regret it, however," interposed his nephew, dextrously averting a repetition of this antiquarian detail, "were there rather less *hauteur* about the countess."

"Hast then suffered from it to-day, my boy?"

"Well, somewhat. But we were reconciled again; for how is it possible to withstand her when she is in a gentle mood?"

"I am glad she quarreled with you," was the sententious remark. "If indifferent to you, she would never have done you that honor! Tell me honestly, now, Waldemar, how you stand in regard to her. I do not wish, in the least, to pry into all your little secrets, but merely to have a correct idea of the position. For, believe me, 'tis a matter which cannot be brought to the right issue by fits of—a—well, of flames and darts, I mean, and that sort of Valentine stuff. Look ye, old bachelor as I am, my counsels may be of service. In arrangement, of course—simply in arrangement."

With some reluctance, Waldemar replied:

"That I love her, sir, you know, and—I think I

have made some impression on her too; indeed, I may say I know as much. But I can never get any explicit answer."

"Has it come so far as that—eh? Hm—so?" asked the uncle, thoughtfully holding his well-worn chin. "You have positively wooed the—the Countess Fransiska! Surely this was a little—yes, I should say—a—a—somewhat precipitate? There are usually some preliminaries, are there not, in such affairs?"

"No, not exactly wooed her, uncle, but still asked her," pursued the young man, repressing a slight tendency to smile, "asked her, observe, sir, if—in short, what was meant by certain indications on her part. To this she gave an evasive answer, and said that she must wait till better times. Do you imagine, dear uncle, that a lady with her means and birth would think of marrying a mere *candidatus philosophiæ* *Valdemar Krone*?"

"Scarcely—well, scarcely! You are right, boy. But it is to be hoped you will in time become something else than *candidatus philosophiæ*—ha, ha! What an absurd title!"

"What a distant prospect, dear uncle!"

"Patience, my young friend! Don't give up hope. *Apropos*, sit still—does the wine not please you? Can't you spend a quiet hour after dinner with the old man? The truth is, I have long had it in my mind to talk matters over with you at leisure. Good—then ring for Hans, and let us go into the parlor to coffee."

Shortly thereafter the old chamberlain sat in his special easy-chair, with Waldemar opposite him, prepared for confidential relaxation. The former liked to have *en face* the person he talked with, and could not bear walking up and down the room or looking out of the window during a conversation—plebeian tendencies of which he had very early cured Waldemar, impressing on him that not only as regards the mind, but with the body, too, repose of manners was among the first requisites to a refined and noble bearing.

The young man had advanced already so far in courtesy and self-command, that, though eager to set off immediately after dinner, he mastered his impatience and offered no objections; at once setting aside a pleasant appointment with Count Wilhelm, by way of diversion from more ardent thoughts, to spend the evening at Vesterbro Theater, where a French circus was then in full course of activity.

Hans had set the coffee, the water, and the equipage on the little table, in that systematic order which had become his custom; and after his departure a solemn stillness reigned in that department, during which Waldemar Krone's thoughts fluttered forth, it must be owned somewhat capriciously between Frederiksberg Avenue, with its fair inmate, and the lively spectacle at the circus, with its gay but easy-mannered parterre. The chamberlain contemplated his adopted son for some moments before he spoke, and as he sat and looked at his protégé, the appearance of the latter made a good impression—the impression that he was a promising, dutiful, meritorious young man, of handsome person and distinguished air, aspiring in his views, yet by no means without modesty; on the whole, a most creditable scion of the noble house Von Krone.

"I wished, my dear boy," began the chamberlain, with some emotion, "to speak a few words with you about your future, and prepare you especially for the possibility, nay, the probability, of my sudden departure."

"But, dear uncle, I—this is painful to me," interrupted Waldemar with sincere feeling. "Why advert to such a——"

"I know very well what you will say," pursued his uncle, with a wave of the hand; "that I look vigorous, and that seventy is not a very great old age, and so forth; but we are mortal, Waldemar. I feel the truth of the statement; my strength is not what it was, my memory occasionally fails, and the gout is a warning. It is one which our family for many generations have had, and too often neglected!"

Waldemar was astonished, as the young often are, at the calmness with which his uncle spoke about death; but at the same time he was heartily grieved at it, for the old man had long treated him with kindness, and been to him all he knew of a father.

"It is therefore best that I should tell you, Waldemar, that I have made my will, and that you, with the exception of a legacy or two, are my sole heir. You will thus be well set out in life; but I must beseech you not to look on my fortune as a subsistence. You are destined to something more than merely to sink into a Mr. Krone—simple Krone, observe—a mere private gentleman. You have a fine future before you, if you exert yourself; but your experience, my dear lad, may well call for direction. I will show you the rock on which you may run aground."

The chamberlain refreshed himself with a little eau-de-cologne, and continued:

"You have in your disposition a dangerous tendency, Waldemar, and that is, a visionary turn of mind. I find no fault with your æsthetic studies, as the phrase is, for they are a good means of cultivating the mind, and you understand, besides, how to employ your talents gracefully; but, mark me, it has never been your notion, I trust, to turn poet, play-actor, or sculptor, or anything of that sort? You have never seriously cherished the stupid idea of wishing to play the part of a fine genius?"

"For that," was the hasty answer, with rather an evasive look, "I certainly never dreamt I had the talent. No, no, my dear uncle, you mistake me, I assure you."

"I suspect, however," continued the chamberlain, "there was at one time some truth in it. Believe me, it leads to nothing. It is worse; it is a doomed career. To become author, artist, or musician, or to be unfortunate in one way or another, either in marriage, or to get into debt, speculate in the funds, dabble in stock, or fall into drinking or gambling habits, are as near as

possible one and the same thing. Look upon such whims, then, as a temptation which you must absolutely master. Let it be a decided matter that you will choose a diplomatic career, and that I this very autumn take the necessary steps to pave the way for it. Yes, my dear Waldemar, would that I may live to see you commence your career! There is one circumstance still which disquiets me. Honestly, now, does not Count Wilhelm advise you to become a farmer, and to purchase a landed estate?"

Waldemar was much surprised that the old man had seen so sharply how things were going. Count Wilhelm had not merely given this general advice, but even inquired if Waldemar Krone did not think that his uncle would have the courage to invest his capital in an estate. In such case he had a beautiful place in view, namely, Tiornholm, with 600 acres arable land, 100 of meadow, and 400 of beech-forest, charmingly situated by the sea, on the east coast of Jutland, only one Danish mile from Dyrland, and two from Gyldenholdt. The only drawback to this property was the want of a mansion, there being none there but an old decayed abode, fit for nothing but to be pulled down. It was partly on this account that the present possessor, the widowed Mrs. Resen, was inclined to sell; but as her late husband had bought it many years before, she had moderate ideas of its value, especially as her profit by the land had always been small, and the whole management of the farm was of that description that "eats itself up." Procurator Sass thought that the estate was to be had at a moderate price. Count Gyldenholdt had at one time thought of buying it, but had now given up the idea, as he did not wish in his old days to increase his large property by a new purchase.

Waldemar had found the whole plan very tempting, but declared to Count Wilhelm that in the first place he did not believe that his uncle would be inclined to enter upon such a speculation; and in the second, he doubted if his fortune were large enough for such a purchase;

at least he did not expect that it exceeded eighty thousand, and the price Mrs. Resen expected was a good round sum.

Not the less declared Count Wilhelm that he should have an eye to Tiornholm, by the purchase of which more money might be made in a day than the old chamberlain had scraped together in fifty years; and then it was a much pleasanter existence than to slave as a mere government official.

Waldemar now candidly answered that the count had doubtless advised him to become a farmer.

"I had a presentiment of it," said the chamberlain; "and it is but natural that he recommends it, as he himself has a similar taste; yet only think how vastly different his position is from yours! Plain and practical in character though he be, he is next heir to an immense property. On the other hand, however accomplished and aspiring you may be, you have but an amount of capital to expect, which in comparison with his is a very small affair! What is suitable for him, for you is not at all fitting."

"I cannot say, either, uncle, that I have the slightest fancy for a country life."

"No, I have not suspected you at all of that; but what thought you of living *en grand seigneur* on an estate—eh? Has not that been one of your dreams? 'Tis a dangerous dream for a man with a moderate fortune; for though my inheritance is perhaps somewhat larger than you suppose, still it is not sufficiently great for you to live on your property as a great man and enjoy life, deputing the management to subordinates. Landed property leads to a rage for building, for fine horses, carriages, landscape-gardening,—all dangerous tastes! Next, of course, your acquaintance would be people of Gyldenholdt's rank, and with such you cannot compete at all. In town, on the other hand, you will always be a rich man. Here you can keep house or let it alone, and if you become a diplomatist, and are sent to foreign countries, your post, with some means to help

it, will place you in a position not a little enviable. You must at last, my dear boy, land on the shelf where your grade lies. All your ancestors have served the king; your father was the only melancholy exception. You yourself were born and brought up to be an official, and you must not play truant from our school! Whatever other path you venture into, you risk failure; official life is secure, and—I may say it without vanity—*my* name will help you on.”

“But, dear uncle——”

“But, dear Waldemar—ha, ha! Dost not think that the whole time I have read your thoughts on your face? Oh youth, oh innocence! A face of twenty years of age like yours is like an open book for an old diplomatist like me; but unquestionably I am in possession of the key to your heart’s secret chamber. You would say, ‘But, dear uncle, all honor to your good counsel, still all this reasoning is superfluous if I win the fair countess’s hand!’ Is’t not so? Here we just draw to the pith of our discourse, see—the countess! I am really a little perplexed in discoursing to you on this point, for the more I think over it, the more deeply I feel that whatever I say will be scattered like chaff before the wind, while your own willfulness brings the affair to a close in its own way.

“Let me therefore, for a moment,” continued the chamberlain, with liveliness, “lay reason on the shelf, and tell you that I sympathize with you with all my heart, for it is certainly the dream of my own youth, which, with extraordinary similarity, you are now repeating. I too once hoped that I should marry the adorable Baroness Sophie. I was still nearer attaining my object than you are, for she was entirely on my side, and yet I did not attain it! Her parents decided the matter against me, and Sophie had not courage to oppose their will. She got a decent husband, but in spite of his great ancestry he was a blockhead, and made a miserable appearance in a drawing-room. He therefore remained principally at his place in the country, amid his horses

and cattle; she lived in the capital, where her beauty and grace shone many a year, and where the only shadow that fell on the dazzling brilliancy of her establishment was when the horse-jockey spouse polluted it with his presence. Ah, how I pitied the poor baroness at such moments! But I did more than that: I consoled her! And as I hope you will assign no equivocal or ugly meaning to my words, I may tell you that, when we were restored to each other in the great world, we formed a friendship which has remained unshaken to this day. The world has respected this beautiful relation, and calumny has not been able to reach it.

“God grant that you may be more fortunate than I, my boy, and win the hand of your amiable and lovely Fransiska! May it be that the old count will conquer prejudices; for it cannot be denied that he has them in an unpardonable degree. Then shall my brightest dreams for you be fulfilled, and you will certainly raise our family to its old position of luster. But should it not succeed, what then? In that case at least you can learn something from me, for hear now how I conducted myself. Although both my courtship and its unhappy result, as well as everything in connection with them, were the topic of general discussion, and it might have been supposed that my defeat must bring me to despair, the world was disagreeably balked in this benevolent expectation. I bore no ill will to the baroness for her unfaithfulness toward me; I was not consumed with grief; I played no foolish trick in my rage, as, for example, going neck over heels into another engagement—the most absurd revenge a rejected lover can take. No! I did none of these things. I made determined efforts to obtain a mission to one of the small German courts which was in prospect, and I succeeded. After a month’s absence I came cheerfully back, settled my affairs, showed the world a contented face, and in course of time paid my due respects to Baroness Stjernholm. If there was any embarrassment on her part, I succeeded in removing it. Since Fate had not permitted

our union, and the highest happiness was denied us, we contented ourselves with that graceful and pleasant relation of friendship of which I have already spoken. From this you may surely learn something, my friend?"

"But, uncle," inquired Waldemar, "can it be that you had really loved her? I mean as—as I love the Countess Fransiska?"

"Most assuredly. Can you ask? Yes, yes, it was love," said the old courtier, passing a hand over his wrinkled forehead, while he looked askance at his nephew. "Unless there are two distinct sentiments entitled to the name! Most certainly, boy, I loved the Baroness Sophie at that time—though not in the extravagant, morbid style which is nowadays talked about. Believe me, your schemes about the countess should be number two, that of securing your future career number *one*! You must not throw away the future for a woman's sake, however handsome, amiable, or rich. Because the Von Gyldenholdts surpass you in wealth and position, you are not therefore to become a clodhopper! I have great confidence in your tact," continued he, "but in your enamored condition reason is never listened to. Let me therefore, in passing, give you a little hint. It has several times been talked of that you are to go to Jutland and visit Gyldenholdt, but observe, these invitations have one and all issued from the young count. Therefore, in my opinion, you should not go across without an invitation from the old count himself. Happen afterward what may, you will thus escape every charge of presumption. If the countess really loves you, she will take care that you are invited in that decided manner."

Waldemar could not but admit the good sense of this counsel, and he sank into reveries on the prospect which a possible invitation to Gyldenholdt opened, when his uncle roused him again by saying:

"Can I rely on it now, Waldemar, that when I am dead and gone, you will never be drawn into a *mésalliance*? Be assured of this, that any lady who has not been

brought up in the great world, and whose family lives in a lower sphere, let her be as fair and as worthy as you please, will be a clog round your feet. Tell me, dost still keep up correspondence with those Stainforths?"

The grounds for this inquiry were derived from having met, in course of the previous spring, with Mrs. Bek of Stromby, a former acquaintance of the old gentleman's. That worthy lady, much flattered by his courteous attentions, found herself authorized to give a sketch of Waldemar Krone's residence in Stromby, and his whole relations with the captain's family. In this way the correspondence between Waldemar and Ida, of which the captain had never made any secret, was placed in an entirely false light; for, owing to the piquant representation of the pastor's wife, the chamberlain was forced to believe that the Stainforths had fished after his nephew for their daughter Ida. The circumstances naturally allowed of this fictitious color; and, sooth to say, there was a degree of apparent justice in the construction put upon them, which nothing but unsophisticated honesty could repudiate, while even *it* was bound to have precluded such a risk. It would have been more prudent of the captain if he had put a stop to the exchange of letters when both ceased to be children, and that particularly for the sake of his own daughter's best interests. True, the exchange of letters had arisen on the simplest footing of early companionship; those addressed to Ida were seen by the whole family, as if meant for the fireside circle in common, and the parents took care to read all that came to her; but they did not reflect that what only rouses a passing interest in old people, may produce a deeper and more lasting impression on the tender mind of youth. Such had been the case with Ida Stainforth; her thoughts learnt to move more and more, as about a center, round Waldemar Krone's mode of thinking; her feelings became the depositary of his in a way which others could not share, many of his fancies and experiences met hers with an interest that escaped notice, till, under the very eyes watching for her security,

insensibly also to herself, she had incurred the danger in question.

It was even yet, however, unconsciously hazarded; the keenest glance in her own quiet household scarce divined it, and no real pretext for suspicion could have occurred to neighbor or stranger. Thus the misinformation furnished by Mrs. Pastor Bek was but idly officious, if not wanton in its drift; nevertheless, as its direct consequence, when the good captain had been in town a short time previous to the conference now described, and thought fit to call upon the chamberlain as well as Waldemar, the former received him with ill-disguised coldness. Ill luck would have it, that the captain was suddenly struck by the idea of paying his visit at Ameligad, when near that street with his daughter, and he did not see what should hinder her to go up with him. Mrs. Stainforth had sometimes found fault with her husband for being so distant in his intercourse with the old gentleman; it therefore seemed as well to show some little extra attention at that opportunity, moved by the kindly wish to see his foster-son again, and hear how things went with him. On the other hand, Ida, however desirous of the latter object, accompanied her father unwillingly, under a presentiment that it might appear forward on her part. The fear had not been diminished by the chamberlain's peculiar demeanor, contriving to blend perfect etiquette with an air of the chilliest dignity and distance, which, to be sure, brought Waldemar's cordiality all the more out, though almost unavoidably lending to it a somewhat forced appearance.

The chamberlain had indeed seen at the first glance that Ida was a dangerous person, and this in a far higher degree than he had guessed. Had she been awkward, inelegant, and possessed of but a rustic bloom, with mere buxom form to match, the chamberlain would have liked her better; paradoxical though it may seem, his reception would have been far more gracious at the sight of a ruddy-haired or a squinting Chloe in Miss Stainforth. But the truth was, Ida was the reverse of his ideas of a

country hoyden, nay, his first glance betrayed, to one familiar with him, that he acknowledged her unquestionable beauty by his own standard, and only did her honor by being afraid of her in that freezing style, with renewed heed to old Mrs. Bek's warning.

Waldemar now answered his uncle's question, by saying that the correspondence had dropped of itself, so far as anything epistolary was concerned, but that of course he always warmly recollected Stromby, and often thought of paying it a visit when it was possible.

"What would be the use of it?" asked the chamberlain. "The captain's people may be very excellent, but they are not your relatives, and their path and yours are no longer the same. Though the captain's opinions and mine are in many respects directly opposed, and I was not quite satisfied with his mode of education, still I believe as regards you he acted to the best of his judgment, and, on the whole, you were properly treated in his house, not a little owing to his amiable wife. Yet it seems to me that we have suitably acknowledged this, and I must repeat to you, what I have said before, that no man who wants to get on in the world should cherish extravagant romantic ideas about the acquaintances of childhood and school friendships."

"You probably refer in this, sir," said his nephew, "to Frank also?"

"Quite so! I am glad, in fact, that the young man has ceased coming here; he had exactly that upturned style of visage and protruded kind of chest which are my antipathy at the present day. They resemble, more than anything I have ever seen, at least under my own roof, a protest against all that is distinguished and aristocratic. Don't argue with me on these points," persisted the chamberlain, in a slightly heated tone; "I know we can agree on neither of them! Still I am bound to warn you, and I do so, once for all."

Waldemar was thus reluctantly silenced; though the uncle, perhaps, would have done better to let the subject be gone through with when set astir. The young man's

gaze fell at that moment on his mother's portrait, lighted up by an afternoon sunbeam. The bright light heightened the thoughtful sweetness of expression which had once given Cecilia Krone's fine features their greatest charm, and which a master's pencil had transferred to the canvas. The meaning countenance spoke silently but forcibly, in a tone very different from those Waldemar had just heard. Had his mother's form been able to resume its flesh and blood, and could it have left the canvas while his friends from Stromby were in the room, how would she have thanked the captain for all the goodness shown to her son in his parentless childhood, and blessed Providence for placing him in such hands? Would she not have kissed Ida, and rejoiced that he had such a sister? He felt heartened in secret, as if his mother's spirit were by, counseling him inaudibly against the apparent wisdom which that prudent child of the world, his uncle, with mistaken kindness, would fain instill. The old man looked toward the picture too, but with the hazy glance of age saw none of its significant import; he made his listener's very blood run cold by saying:

"A fine portrait it is, Waldemar, and a striking likeness. No wonder we notice it at such moments, for filial duty should sanction my words. Nay, more, you may gain there a lesson of good sense. 'Twas the work of our best court painter at the time, and was very expensive—too expensive for their position. He grudged her nothing, in fact; but 'twas wrong, even in such a point, to fall in with his whim. I prize it now truly, and can afford the luxury; yet, except for that chance, it must have lain in some lumber-garret with strangers."

He would then have grudged this precious benefit to her child; it was characteristic indeed as to the precepts of worldly experience.

The interview was broken up by an announcement from old Hans. Count Ferdinand's servant had brought an inquiry whether young Mr. Krone were gone out. If not, the pleasure of his company was desired by the

Gyldenholdt party to drive out to the evening circus. The horses stamp at the gate, and soon our hero, along with the whole of the younger branches of the Gyldenholdt family, is seated at the Vesterbro Theater. There, they had to admire the truly bewitching Barlinsky, whose graceful form and glittering black eyes led gentlemen to commit as many absurdities as there were loops in her stockings. Her fair fellow-riders, too, had bewitching coquetties of their own to spin for the allurement of flattering gallantry, while the chief of the troupe moved like an old spider amid the web, ready to divide the spoil at last; but similes so ugly were far from befitting the spectacle itself, to which civic respectability thronged behind the decorous presence of fashion, and all was gay excitement.

In the box with which the Lehnsgreve indulged the whole family, Waldemar Krone was included, either by the favor of Count Wilhelm, or at the instance of his fair cousin. He had eyes only, at all events, for the countess's own charming profile, while she turned round to salute the arrivals from Ameliégad. On the farthest bench sat her three cousins, the Countesses Sophie, Louise, and Kathinka, handsome girls, with bright eyes, rosy cheeks, good-natured smiles on their lips, and elegant toilets—Fransiska's brilliancy throning it in the midst of them like Diana among her nymphs. Around her they nodded, laughed, and talked, but she shared only at intervals in their prattle; the spectacle itself drew from her a mere partial or a listless notice; she seemed at times engrossed in her own thoughts, nor did she appear concerned that various double opera-glasses were directed on her as to a focus.

The old count was anxious to see the horses of the circus, about which he had heard so much, and his brother Ferdinand had no objection to point out the best of them, while he cast shrewd glances at the pretty riders. Unfortunately these two worthy gentlemen thus formed a barrier between the ladies on one side, and Waldemar Krone and Count Wilhelm on the other. The

two young cavaliers could therefore, with the better grace, repair to that privileged corner—the entrance from the stalls to the riding-ground—where the lions of the capital are wont to be admitted. From this spot our hero enjoyed the glorious vision of his Diana; saw her recognize him with a smile, and received an almost imperceptible bow. The blood coursed quicker through his veins; he meditated giddily on the almost incredible fact of having that very forenoon talked with the goddess—talked to her about love, and pressed to his lips her fair hand, on which rare jewels now flashed, as her glove left it for a moment.

There came Baron Cederborn, the puppet, the pompous fool! The countess looked as if she did not see him. Secretary Hagenfurth—yes, he claimed her bow, but he was too dry, too finical and diminutive to gain her smile, too unpardonably ugly with all his wealth and his attentions! Groom of the Bedchamber Boldt—she might nod to him, nay, listen to some remarks of his afterward, but she never would look favorably on a man with a bald head, a long nose, and legs so hopelessly ill-shapen. No; youth, good looks, and ability must conquer! Some fine day Waldemar Krone would snatch the golden fruit from before all rivals, let them use their opera-glasses as they might.

Into the circus came at length the marvelous acrobat Bajads, standing, or rather walking, on his head, to entertain the public with a speech which no lexicon could help you to understand, though it drew forth bursts of laughter. Bajads was a matchless gymnast, and would have still more terrified the ladies with his neck-breaking feats, only he seemed so much at home in them as to suggest the notion of having been born for the purpose. Watch him. There we have the old spider in fine new clothes, and brightly polished boots; he bows to the audience; immediately thereafter the stall-doors are opened, and a steed rushes in like a flash of lightning, with the charming Barlinsky on its back. The young lady has such a beaming countenance, and so light a

dress, that a thunder-storm of popular applause—begun, perhaps, from the fashionable lions' corner—breaks forth, and shakes the house. One marvel succeeds another, till at last Bajads, with a masterly whirl through the hoops, closes the performance with *éclat*, and all depart with hot cheeks, bedazzled eyes, and very much cramped feet.

Waldemar Krone was at hand when the Countess Fransiska rose to go, and he had the happiness of placing her cloak round the beautifully moulded ivory shoulders. Every trace of displeasure or coquetry seemed to have vanished from her expression, and she thanked him so benignly, that Waldemar's heart beat with a transport beyond conception. Her three faithful knights, Cederborn, Hagenfurth, and Boldt, came too late to assist her, but they betook themselves so immediately, and with such *empressement*, to the cousins, that it would seem to have been only and alone for their sakes that they had come to the door of the box. The august head of the house of Gyldenholdt took leave with almost friendly ceremony; the younger branches with hearty warmth, and every one drove home.

CHAPTER V.

IN STROMBY.

A DAY or two after Chamberlain Krone had given his heir his prudent counsel, and, as it were, made his will orally, the captain and Brask sat together in the office at Stromby. The captain stuck his pen behind his ear, twisted round his office-stool, and, as was now and then his custom, suddenly addressed Brask:

"What do you think, Brask, of my refusing the boarders I might have got lately? Ay, and I will take

no more of them. Waldemar Krone is my last foster-child."

"Yes, captain," replied Brask, ambiguously. "Yes, sir. I miss the boys; in especial Mr. Waldemar, who was ever a favorite with me."

"So others say besides you. I suppose he must have been born to steal hearts, and I liked the boy myself. But we were partial, my good Brask, we were partial, and perhaps it might have been better the other way."

"He was always well-behaved in the office," argued the worthy functionary; "never made faces at me, nor stuck papers on folks' backs like others."

"And in return you ran his errands for him, bought prunes and raisins for him, and played with him when he should have been at his lessons. You were none the busier here, I should say, of his slipping in beside you when I was in the town."

"Well, well, captain——"

"For example, when he managed to set the empty post-chaise agoing from the door here, till it got away with him and the others, and the pole broke a cellar-window, smashing ever so many bottles of wine—eh, Brask?"

"I certainly interceded for him on that occasion, captain."

"Ah, that you did—as much as you could, when stuttering for want of good reasons! You remember, too, what I answered? 'Very well,' said I, 'the boys struck the chaise, the chaise the window, the window the flasks, and then the flasks the captain, so now he will strike the boys in turn.' It was all to run round like a nursery rhyme; but for all that, the captain did not strike. Better if he had, perhaps?"

"Like enough; it may be so," reflected Brask. "But, captain, you were at first rather strict with young Krone."

"By particular request only, Brask, from his uncle. The old gentleman soon afterward wrote to say he was to be treated in every sense as handsomely as possible,

like a Von Krone—which was far more to my mind. At first I was too strict, and then I grew too mild. How hard it is to hit the medium! It's not easy to be firm, Brask, and kind too."

"But it has done him no harm, sir. Krone has turned out a most honorable young man, surely?"

"Inasmuch as he neither robs nor commits violence—true. You may rely on it, though, that the old uncle does his best to mould him to his own shape, and cram him full of the world's ways. If ere long the world becomes his rule, what then?"

"He will assuredly not so soon forget all of the good he learnt at Stromby."

"One thing I taught him, perhaps, or fixed in him. Krone was never remarkably discreet or diligent, neither was he distinguished for order or steadiness; but he was generous at heart, he never told me a lie, and that was certainly something. But perhaps by this very uprightness, which showed itself so well, he too often disarmed me."

"Honesty is a great thing, captain, but I still believe that most children are honorable."

"And I believe that most children are more or less dishonest; I have heard a child tell a lie before it could speak plain."

"That was terrible, captain! But it must have learnt that from other naughty children."

"And whence had the other naughty children learnt it? You know where the germ of evil lies—in the very source, Brask: in the mother that bears them."

"But Christ once placed a little child in the midst of His disciples, and said: 'Except ye repent, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.'"

"Well, a child is certainly the most innocent being the earth has to produce; but there is no mention made of this child's age. I mean that the proof of sin awakens with self-consciousness; if it had not been so, then had the Saviour not needed to suffer death on our behalf."

"Mr. Frank is of quite a different opinion, captain. He says that by nature we are good."

"Ah, Frank is——"

And at the same moment the door opened, and as coincidences will happen oddly, young Frank himself entered, hot and dusty, from the road.

"Whence in all the world come *you*?" exclaimed the captain.

"Direct from town."

"Not on foot?"

"Yes, on foot. As the days are so warm, I last night set out from Copenhagen, and here you have me."

They now went into the parlor, where the student found a hearty reception. It sometimes happened nowadays to Frank that the town became too close for him, his garret in Norrevold too narrow, and the books there musty and tiresome; for, after undergoing, along with Krone, what is called the second examination, he had taken the resolution of studying the great circle of science. He carried on his studies with zeal, seldom mixed with the other students, and took no part in social life. A lonely bird as he was, he sometimes liked to fly out, and then dear old Stromby was always the goal, for there he was at home. Mrs. Stainforth's hospitality, a virtue she exercised without restraint, and which therefore imparted to every guest a feeling of agreeable ease; a conversation with his intelligent and fatherly friend, the captain; a little dispute with Madame Kortsen—so that all was but in the sweet neighborhood of Ida; yes, these were in Frank's opinion enough to transform and renew a man. Frederica had indeed now grown up to the honor of being an object of Frank's attention, but she had the misfortune often to fall into disputes with him, and she answered at once so humorously and so illogically that Frank was fairly puzzled. It was evident that the little girl understood life better than the learned Frank. Ida, on the other hand, was and continued to be his ideal, till his heart seemed here to be really in danger; but of this she had no suspicion,

and Frank's dread of affectation strangled every token of his feelings in its birth.

From an external point of view, Frank's position had now, however, become quite changed: his father was dead, and had left him fifteen thousand dalers, which made it possible for him to devote himself entirely to his studies. The captain's remonstrance had after all borne fruit, and a reconciliation between old Frank and his son had taken place before the death of the former. Yet it was obvious to the captain that Frank was moved to take this step more by a feeling of duty than from affection. The latter openly maintained that only those who sympathize with each other were akin; the bond of blood was a pure fancy, which, when it did not produce hatred and jealousy, yet gave occasion to artificial sentimentality. To this the captain answered that the young man did not know himself what he was saying, Ida shook her head disapprovingly, and Frederica expressed her satisfaction that Frank was not her brother.

In religious disputations the captain had several times engaged with their young visitor, but at last he declared he would never do it again, and when Frank wished to know the reason of this, the captain honestly answered:

"In all our disputations, but especially about religion, my friend, the evil that is in your nature comes forth. Every time I have had a little tilting-match of this sort with you, I have come to think less of you than before; whereas my wish was to like you better the longer I knew you. You do not believe in a personal God, you assert prayer—the holy intercourse of the soul of man with the Most High—to be a peculiarly affected proceeding, a miserable refuge for weak minds, the mother of self-deception and hypocrisy, and I know not what other *galimatias*. It is my only hope regarding you, Frank, that you have already reached the utmost limits of unbelief, and that you cannot possibly remain there. Such opinions don't last a life through, and as to what you call your system—which, however, is nothing new—if it

is built on anything, 'tis built on youth, health, strength, and perhaps the confidence of happiness. A stout foundation—but, look you, one that does not last!”

In the evening the family were assembled in the lime-tree summer-house in the garden, and Frank had just given a humorous sketch of his hermit life in the garret at Norrevold, when the captain, touching his arm with the point of his pipe, inquired, “Have you seen Walde-
mar Krone lately?”

Madame Kortsen, at this question, had a little attack of the dry cough by which the old lady, so to speak, was constantly besieged; and Ida stooped her head still deeper over her work, while her needle went with redoubled speed.

“No,” answered Frank, “not since you were in town.”

“Is it really true he has become so select in his circle as to give up all intercourse with his former fellow-students!”

“I almost believe it; at least he never visits *me*.”

“He has perhaps visited you oftener than you him?”

“Most certainly.”

“Well, then, the blame is perhaps on your own side.”

“It is quite mutual,” said Frank; “we have really no longer anything in common.”

“But you have told us before,” remarked Captain Stainforth, “you had various fine talks with him on art and poetry and such matters, so as to surprise you how much he was at home on those territories.”

“True; but now it seems, as you say, he is going to be a diplomatist. That accounts for all. The old state-puppet, his uncle, has spoiled him, and he is only allowed a very promising head for ideas. He is now permitted to associate, I fancy, only with counts, barons, ambassadors, and—and other court-baboons!”

“It is not just, Frank,” said Mrs. Stainforth, “thus to draw the stroke over a whole class in society whom we are accustomed to honor. May not Krone, then, find cultivated men in a distinguished rank? He naturally

belongs to this grade on account of his uncle's position, and it would not raise him in our eyes, surely, if he preferred some frivolous carouse at the Regent's to an elegant court reception, or a ball in the great world."

"You take no part in anything publicly yourself, Frank," said Frederica, "and so how should Waldemar Krone meet with you? I think it, on the other hand, very nice of him, that he has, notwithstanding, visited you now and then an Norrevold."

"I see you are all against me," said Frank. "Will you not come to my help, Ida?"

But Ida did not reply, though her lately pale cheek was overspread with a deep flush.

Early next day, while the others still slept, Ida went out alone by her favorite path to the mill, dressed in her light morning gown, with a white kerchief over her head and a parasol in her hand. It was a beautiful autumn morning, and the fresh air did her good, while she first sauntered slowly, then hastened, till, as if becoming more at one with herself, she moved at a steady pace. She went down to the mill, and seated herself on the pine-tree beside the great dam, the place from which her little sketch of the mill was taken, and from which the old willow looked so beautiful.

How much had Ida not dreamt on this spot during the last two years, and how many recollections from the days of her childhood were not bound up with it! These memories rose up from the meadow, they came out of the pine-grove, they emerged from the river, and danced round her like little elfin ephemeræ of the stream; but the rose-tinge of hope no longer gave these visions their old charm. Had she then gone down there to forget? No—rather to remember and to meditate. She went over again the whole of her past history, from the days when Waldemar Krone was dear to her as a brother, when every thought of coldness and separation was strange to her, until now, when without doubt he was lost to her forever. Affection had, in the loveliness of home, grown up from a little plant, nourished in the sunshine

of happy dreams, and watered with tears, into a high tree, whose roots had fastened themselves deep in her heart. Now, indeed, at the root of that tree an axe was laid, the weapon of fate not to be disowned.

She had undergone, during her visit to Copenhagen that summer, a sharp experience of the changes of life, and a manifest one. How deeply had she not felt, that in spite of Waldemar Krone's cordiality, she was yet a solitary in her dreamland! It was no longer as in the old days; and what was it, then, that had separated them? It was merely that great ocean, the world, where one cannot row about in small boats and pluck water-lilies, as in Stromby waters. No, those great waters were traversed by grand ships alone, and the small skiffs that came in their way had but to be left behind, when not pitilessly run down and sunk.

During these days something had occurred which had opened the wound of her heart in the most painful manner. The controller of customs in Stromby, a middle-aged but wealthy man, had asked her hand, and her own parents seemed not unfavorably disposed toward the match. Councillor Petersen was a respectable but somewhat simple individual, and, in the next place, of so prosaic a nature, that even without paying regard to his five and forty years, it was difficult to point out one with whom Ida was less capable of sympathizing. Yet that did come in question with her more or less. She had searched into her inmost feelings, and was quite persuaded that it was impossible for her to love any other than Waldemar Krone. She did not tell this to her parents, but she unhesitatingly rejected the councillor, and was thereafter painfully surprised to perceive some mortification at home, especially on her father's part. The captain allowed her to have entirely her own way, but it evidently displeased him that she refused so good an offer almost with indignation.

She felt more and more that this inactive, still life at home had become burdensome, and she feared lest her dear friends might at last discover her heart's secret.

This thought of her feelings being discovered annoyed her much; her parents would certainly disapprove of so hopeless a passion, and she would cause sorrow to those she had loved so deeply. Would it not be better to go out into the world and earn her own bread, than here to become daily less and less fitted to gladden and cheer up the old people? She considered herself able to teach young children, and the result of her morning's deliberation was the resolve to seek a governess's post. On the first opportunity she would talk with her mother about it, and she did not think it so difficult to get her father's consent. She, indeed, felt keenly how hard it would be to herself to leave home, and that her parents would no doubt try to dissuade her; still they must allow the reasonableness of her desire for activity, and it occurred to her that her father especially must consider it worthy of respect, if she preferred being useful to remaining objectless at home. Of course she was wrong in this conjecture, for she forgot that she was barely eighteen years old. On this ground alone the captain would have refused his consent at this time, and though it would have perhaps pleased him that in spite of her youth she had strength for such a resolution, it would at the same time have amazed him much; he would certainly have inquired into the secret moving cause which had urged her to it.

This did not strike her; she underrated both the resistance she might expect and the difficulties of the calling to which she wished to devote herself. Eased by having come to a resolution, she rose up to go home, when Frank suddenly stood before her.

"Do you see," said he, pointing as if to save her from any surprise, "that I now love the old willow-tree there as well as you do? My first thought this morning was the same as yours seems to have been,—to go down and visit it. It is a glorious morning too, Ida, and I am glad to have met you."

"Yes, it is a fine morning, Frank," she cordially said.

"But by this time they must be expecting us home to breakfast."

"And I was just going to ask you to come a little way round! *One* short walk with you, Ida, I consider almost as my right when at Stromby."

"Your right?" asked Ida, as, in spite of the pre-occupation of her mind, she began to observe his warmth of tone.

"You object to the word—pray, then, let it pass. At least, I may tell you that your society is dearer to me than all else here."

"That is very flattering to me, but no doubt you say more than you mean."

"Such is not my way, as you know," persisted he. "I—I am sincere, Ida! you surely know *that*?"

In her perplexity for suitable words, Ida made no reply.

"Is it possible," Frank awkwardly went on, "that you have not perceived the truth?"

"Perceived it—about what, Frank?" was her embarrassed answer, not without a heightening of color at these enigmatic questions.

"As—as regards *you*? My true feeling toward you," he explained, with unmistakable ardor. "Oh, do not tell me, dear Ida, that you do not respond to it!" was his earnest addition to the avowal.

Ida Stainforth felt truly pained at this unlooked-for declaration, the probability of which had been quite hidden from her by feelings of her own; she still looked at him without answer, but the young man's excitement made him press her to give it.

"I do not understand why—I mean, I scarcely recognize my friend Frank to-day!" she said at last. "I have not in any way given you ground for such strange questioning!"

Frank continued, in his round-about way, to declare to Ida his affection, and at last got a decisive refusal. As soon as this had taken place, however, Ida recovered her self-possession in the same degree as Frank lost his,

and as she could no longer be misunderstood, she spoke to him in the former friendly manner. He answered in so bitter a tone that at last Ida exclaimed :

"Why, oh why, dear Frank, should we become estranged on this account? It would indeed grieve me very much. How could you so mistake me—and yourself?"

This accusation of mistake provoked Frank yet more; a reply hovered on his lips, which, had it been uttered, would not have been easily forgotten. For, after recovering a little from the first shock which Ida's refusal caused him, the scales fell, as it were, from his eyes, and with the sharp vision of jealousy he remembered several trifling circumstances, from their first visit to Stromby until now, which awakened suspicion that Waldemar Krone was the happy man. Yes, it must be he; Ida loved him, and he was insensible to it. Was ever such a darling of fortune known as Waldemar Krone! A glance at Ida's countenance, which bore traces of sincere concern, brought him back to himself. Frank silently struggled with himself, and then said :

"I am not ungrateful; you shall have no trouble on my account. I will not run away in wrath, and no one shall know anything of what has passed between us, but I shall not soon come back again to Stromby."

With this declaration Ida was content. She felt convinced that Frank had really been mistaken in himself, and that in time he would discover it, and then all would be well again. Frank's vexation made up so large an ingredient in his feelings at this disappointment, that it looked as though Ida were right. He was more angry than distressed, and it gave him less trouble than he had believed to conceal what had just taken place. He now passed, though in a more serious manner, through the same sharp fire that Waldemar Krone had encountered at school. He found that he admired and respected Ida more than he loved her, and the time did come, when he meditated on how that special morning he had been surprised by love. He had believed himself secure

against such a weakness, and felt himself humbled by his mistake.

An uneasy sense of this affected him throughout the course of the day, and if any one had narrowly examined both his appearance and Ida's, as they assembled with the others to breakfast, they would probably have guessed that they had had a difference together, if not a scene of some sort.

The captain had this day awakened with a good idea; it was a shame, he said, that Frank had never been at Randrupgaard, and therefore he proposed that they should go out there in the afternoon. The proposal was received with approbation, especially by Ida, for it was one of her greatest enjoyments to visit Clara Bruun.

At two o'clock the vehicle stood at the door, and Brask executed several dangerous gymnastic exercises on the high wheel, putting things to rights. Frederica sat there already, with beaming eyes, and her mother, with Brask's assistance, overcame the difficulties of mounting; Ida stood on the stair in a clear blue dress and a white hat, which became her exceedingly; Aunt Lene went past her, provided with a good umbrella (for she despised parasols), together with a large well-filled bag, which she carried with her on every occasion, without the general nature of its contents having come to light down to the present date, and which the captain called in sport Lene's knapsack. This bag, during the ascent into the carriage, made many swings, and knocked Brask's spectacles off his nose, putting him *hors de combat*, as the French say, so as to prevent him offering his help while Ida mounted the carriage; she slipped by, however, as light as a bird, seating herself to all appearance as gayly. Frank got in from the other side; lastly came the captain, who, when he seated himself in the driver's place beside Frank, weighed it down several inches. The captain wrapped the notorious "queer blue cloak" round his legs, received his large meer-schaum and tobacco-pouch from Brask's hands, then just saved his hat, which was off its balance, and so they rolled away.

The drive and the arrival at Randrupgaard would, under other circumstances, have afforded Frank much enjoyment, and the old-fashioned, irregular mansion itself was well fitted to find grace in his sight as a friend of the picturesque, or to furnish materials for a warm dispute with Madame Kortsen, who strenuously stood up for classic order and symmetry. But the student was of course not at present inclined to argument, and Aunt Lene threw down the gauntlet to him once or twice in vain. Nevertheless, he could not help observing the sequestered beauty and romantic situation of Randrupgaard.

The arrival of the visitors seemed not merely to delight, but also to surprise Bruun and Clara. She ejaculated an emphatic "No—impossible!" while her husband precipitately dashed off, as if to make indispensable preparations, but soon returned in overflowing glee. When they were seated in the summer-house, Bruun said:

"Well, I am delighted, Frank, to get you out here at last; that is to say, on my own account—for here there is certainly nothing worth your seeing."

"Nothing worth seeing!" answered Frank. "It seems to me all very beautiful and rural."

"Yes, certainly rural enough! I know that well enough; my place looks like a pig-sty. But when times improve, some fine day I shall tear down the old affair, and build a new farm-house."

"That would be infamous, Bruun! The finest feature in your house is its age and venerable appearance. I don't care for things of yesterday."

"That is remarkable!" exclaimed Bruun. "The newer the better, I'd say!"

"I can well believe," said the captain, "that Randrupgaard, in all its worm-eaten venerableness, must be like 'found victuals' for Frank's poetic hunger. You enjoy it as an epicure his old cheese, don't you, Frank? I was surprised that immediately on your arrival you did not break forth in its praises, for I always thought

that Randrupgaard would inspire you. I must tell you, Bruun, that our friend Frank is crazy about everything old, twisted, and upside-down."

"A curious broker's sort of taste," laughed worthy Bruun.

"Yes, but I ought to tell you," continued the captain, "there is the true poet's nature in our friend. He has keen powers of conception, and beholds visions where the rest of us are blind."

"You don't actually mean to be a poet, Frank?" asked Bruun with simplicity. "It is a poor way of earning a livelihood; you should rather try for some good official post!"

Bruun and Frank had now entered the door of the garden, and there continued the conversation alone, while Ida and Frederica went outside with Bruun's children.

"Have you ever seen anything more charming than the two sisters, Frank?" asked Bruun in a low tone. "Look at Ida—how highly she steps, almost as if her feet did not touch the ground. She is at present, in my opinion, the beauty of the two; but do you know Frederica is not bad-looking either, and she grows prettier every day."

"Well, yes," answered Frank, "I agree with you."

"Deuce take it, how cold-blooded you are! It even warms the heart of an old married man like me to see two such beaming eyes as Ida Stainforth's. But take care you don't get the green stockings there, see!"

This homely phrase of "green stockings" Frank declared to be a vulgar one, positively senseless, and one which roused his indignation to hear.

"You wish to get off," said the unconscious Bruun, "but it is a shame if a girl like Ida is allowed to grow old single. Lately she has seemed to me so grave that I have sometimes thought she was sighing from some unhappy attachment. Here in Stromby there is not a single gentleman dares to lift his eyes to her, and the only one who proposed for her was refused."

"Proposed!" was Frank's confused reiteration. "Oh, who was that?"

"Oh, old Petersen, the controller of customs; he was but a poor husband for Ida, and he behaved like a blockhead, for he proposed for her first and courted her afterward. Had I proposed for a lady and been refused, I would certainly not have gone poking my nose there again, but the controller continues to persecute poor Ida with loving glances. The pastor's wife, who has a finger in every pie, patronizes his wooing, and has pleaded his cause strongly to the captain; she has once or twice said spiteful things to Ida about being so fastidious, and Mrs. Stainforth does not rightly understand how to defend her daughter, or show Mrs. Bek the door. I believe that the controller is her suitor once more. It is really an unpleasant situation for poor Ida, for though the captain gave her all her own way, I don't think he liked her point-blank refusal of Petersen."

Clara now hastily appeared, and said to him: "Why, Bruun, you are entirely forgetting!"

"Good heavens! yes," exclaimed he, leading to the garden; "what do my guests say to a turn round the walks?"

The whole company accepted the invitation, and as they approached the shrubberies, a cuckoo sang out with unusual distinctness in the vicinity.

"That is strange," said Mrs. Stainforth. "I never in my life before heard a cuckoo in September."

"Cuckoo, cuckoo!"

"What is all this cuckooing?" exclaimed Madame Kortsen, going quickly in among the bushes; but the cuckooing was at her back, and when she turned round, there it was in front of her; for a little stout gentleman in black coat and trowsers, with spectacles on his hooked nose, and a jovial smile on his lips, stood there as if he had grown up out of the ground, and spread out his arms, while he cried:

"Cuckoo! and good day, dearest sister-in-law."

"What, Peer!" said Aunt Lene, drawing a long breath, "to come bumping down so from the skies, and frighten the life out of people!"

"I could not, on my honor, deny myself the pleasure of surprising you, Lene," answered Pastor Peter Kortsen. "Many kind regards from my old woman!"

Ida and the children now came forward in great glee. They had met the pastor in the garden, and been let into the secret; but Uncle Peer was so delighted at seeing Ida again as a grown-up lady, having parted with her ten years before as a child, that he got deeply engaged in conversation with her; and the surprise would have been lost if Frederica had not exclaimed in time: "There they come!" and then Ida and the children stepped back to watch the result. The captain and his wife now each got hold of the pastor's hands, and Frank was introduced.

"I introduced myself to Ida," said the pastor, taking off his spectacles and polishing them with his pocket-handkerchief. "I knew her again at once, though she was only eight years old when I saw her last, but hers is a face that once seen is not easily forgotten, and she is strikingly like herself!" The pastor nodded benignly to Ida, who, not being as yet accustomed to Uncle Peer's ways, was a little abashed.

"But tell us now, sensibly and rationally," entreated Aunt Lene, "how come you to be here, when I got a letter from you yesterday in which there was not a word about traveling?"

"Yesterday, Lene! not until yesterday, Stainforth? It is a miserable post-conveyance we have here in the country."

"That may be, my friend," answered the captain. "Lodge a complaint at the general post-office."

"Good and well; it may be that the blame rests with the Soren postman, who is a terrible blockhead; but when we compare the date of the letter with the postmark, it will be seen how long Soren has been bringing it to Aarhus."

"The letter has no date at all," answered Aunt Lene.

"No date?—slander, Lene!"

"Now, Kortsen," said the captain, laughing, "this is not the first time that has happened; it arises from your being always in such a hurry."

"Enough," continued the pastor; "it is an endless long time since I wrote it. At that time I had not the slightest intention of traveling, but lately I got a letter from my publisher which frightened me into coming. You are aware that I am busy preparing a small volume of sermons: contending with the publisher, printer, and corrector of the press would be interminable; so I resolved at once to come over myself and cut the Gordian knot with my own hand. In the next place, I wished at the same time to carry out the long-projected diplomatic visit here to Stromby; I have a dispatch with me from Lise."

"How is she, then? Just the life in her, and no more?" asked Madame Kortsen.

"Yes, that you may well say," answered the pastor more seriously. "She is always sickly, and her mind is so depressed; something must be done—but more of that to-morrow!"

"Yes, friend, we have been left too long to guess at your diplomatic secret."

"Well," continued the pastor, lively again, "I packed my trunk, drove to Aarhus, and proceeded by the *Iris* to Copenhagen. Whom should I meet, as next morning I was coming out of Knopsted's, but his honor Squire Bruun of Randrupgaard, whose acquaintance I had already had the pleasure of making, on his visit to Jutland for the purpose of employing the powerful Cimbric race to renew the worn-out blood of Zealand,—*id est*, the time he was there buying cattle. And so he immediately offered me a seat in his conveyance, on the condition that I would stay all night at Randrupgaard. We came here last night, and the harness was now on the brown beasts

to drive to Stromby, when you dear folks by a happy chance forestalled us."

Pastor Kortsen nodded in a friendly manner to them all, and then began to chat with the captain and Mrs. Stainforth about old times, till he suddenly sprang up and led Ida into the window recess; here he commenced a long conversation with her, during which the spectacles were often taken off and dried. Then Clara appeared, and was drawn into the conference. Kind Clara! How her eyes beamed, and her cheeks glowed from the household bustle and the delight of having all the dear folks assembled at Randrupgaard! So they went to dinner, and a feeling of snug comfort seized the guests as they seated themselves, for it was as well provided and neatly set out a table as could be seen.

"Can you offer better fare in Jutland, Kortsen?" asked the captain.

"No, indeed!" answered the pastor. "I must give my compliments to the hostess; but the best after all are the faces round the board. Why on earth have I never gone to Stromby before?"

"There, Kortsen," said the captain, reaching the pastor a plate of ham. "In the old days you were no despiser of good things, and you are not so still!" and he clapped Uncle Peer on the shoulder.

"Now, Stainforth," roared the pastor, giving himself a shake, "let my tastes alone! I was never a hypocrite, and I know good fare. What excellent radishes! Don't look at me, Ida, for I take the biggest."

"When I look back thirty years, Peer," said Madame Kortsen, "you seem to me as youthful now as then."

"Have I not really got a degree more settled and reasonable? May not one, let me ask, become young again on meeting with his friends, and by being surprised into the bargain by so much youth and amiability?" and here the pastor looked at Clara, Ida, and her sister.

"That was meant for you too, Clara," said the captain.

Clara replied that it was really so long since she

had heard a compliment, that she was quite abashed at it.

"There you got it, Bruun!" said the captain.

Bruun drank off his glass, and then playfully fillicated a little crumb of bread at his wife.

"Compliments," said he, "are for ladies as cakes are for children; they taste nice, but are unwholesome food. What say you, Frank?"

"That I can as little pay a compliment as I could bake a cake."

"What an admission of incompetency for a man of your years!" exclaimed the pastor. "Is the present generation really so destitute?"

"Come, Kortsen," said the captain, "every one has not so elastic a temper as yourself, nor the tongue-strings so well oiled."

"*Apropos*," exclaimed the pastor briskly; "since you speak of elasticity, I have got a pair of the new gum-elastic goloshes—a grand invention! How pleasant it is to be quite water-tight! I tried them yesterday in a gutter—I don't mean with set intention. I tumbled along with a woman from Amager, who jostled me, as she had a huge basket on each arm, and would not respect the right of way, one of the most glorious and most rational privileges of the citizens of Copenhagen."

When the general laugh at this mishap had ceased, the pastor continued:

"I shall have the honor of having brought the first india-rubber shoe to Stromby. I hope you don't have them here already? A brother-in-law and uncle should never come without presents, so I have got six pairs with me, and you can choose for yourselves."

"Aunt Lise's health!" proposed the captain, filling his glass toward the close of the meal. "She is the only one absent from us this evening," and the toast was drunk by all with sincere good wishes.

The evening passed cheerfully in pleasant chat, a little gossip, and some music; at ten o'clock the guests drove home, and Pastor Kortsen, of course, accompanied them to Stromby.

The next morning a sort of family council was held in the captain's study, at which the good-humored Uncle Peer set himself to look grave; and indeed, to Ida's view, there was then a reverent air about him, that endeared the old man more than his sprightly talk of thirty years ago. When their deliberations reached a certain point, Aunt Lene begged Ida to go to her room with Frederica; but Ida could hear up stairs that the old people's voices got very loud. The pastor and the captain lighted their morning pipes, and the discourse was continued.

"So, then," said the pastor, knocking out the ashes of his pipe, "it is a settled affair that Lene goes home with me?"

"Of course," answered the captain thoughtfully; "she herself has so determined, and we must submit to it, however averse to parting with her. She has, so to speak, grown fast to our little circle here."

"Just so," said the pastor briskly, as if in haste to screw up his courage for something bolder. "Therefore it seems to me not so strange if she should take away a little bit of it to Bonderup. What say you to the proposal that Ida shall go too? Yes, here you have a formal invitation from the pastor!"

"What! our Ida?" exclaimed the captain and his wife in a breath.

"Yes, your Ida!" repeated Uncle Peer. "Is it such a strange notion of mine?"

"No, no, Kortsén, you must not rob us of our all; thanks, however, for the offer."

"Thanks, indeed!—ha, ha, ha!"

"How in all the world have you fallen on such an idea, Kortsén?" asked Mrs. Stainforth.

"Ah, well, you see, I thought of it all yesterday, but would never have come out with it if I had not been asked to do so."

"Asked—by whom?"

"Yes; you see, Lene, I can no longer protect myself——"

Madame Kortsen now broke out on her brother-in-law, for the bargain had been that she was not to appear in the affair. Peer, the traitor, must expect punishment. He stooped down in his seat and let the first volley go over his head, then he quietly resumed:

"Listen now, friend Stainforth, and you too, Trine! None of you will accuse Lene and me of selfishness? Certainly I own that neither Lene nor any of you could bring so much pleasure to my poor Lise at the parsonage of Bonderup as this darling would—God bless her! I can also well understand what a blank to you would be her absence for some time; the dear girl's presence is half your life, I can see. But Lene says she has planned this journey solely and simply for Ida's own benefit. She declares her pet is getting moped and delicate in health here, home though it be; at present, it seems, there is a great want in Stromby of educated young girls—she thinks it wrong that Ida should not go out a little into the world and look about her. New circumstances, look ye, and contact with strangers, are the things to enliven and train up. Besides, half a year is not an eternity! All this Lene thinks, though she leaves Peer to say it, and what's more, to bear the——"

"Art then become bashful in your old days, Lene?" asked the captain. "With reverence be it spoken, the pair of you seem to me like two children, when the one thrusts the other forward to beg mother for another apple, though with pockets quite full."

"Yes, Stainforth, an apple to make the inhabitants of Bonderup parsonage young again! A bright young glance always ready for them, a kiss at bed time, a pretty word of a morning,—these are apples for us old folks, I own! But we're grudged our share of 'em—eh?"

With some ill grace the captain nodded assent and denial together. Ida could not be spared from Stromby; he would not part with her on any account; and he declared all the talk about her melancholy and delicate health to be a myth. Mrs. Stainforth could as little be reconciled

to the idea of sending Ida for half a year away without due cause. Where, indeed, could she be better than among her own people?

The pastor, therefore, went back to town without touching further on the matter, promising, however, duly to fetch his sister-in-law in eight days. Frank went off with him, and, as he took leave, was manifestly affected. Ida was now far more cordial in her manner than before, and the young man was now forced to own to himself that there was something charming in the trusting manner with which she now met him, when aware she could not possibly be misunderstood. He sighed deeply at the thought that he was now driven out of his paradise; but it still did him good to hear the whole family entreat, with the usual heartiness, that he would soon come back again to Stromby. *How*, truly, could he ever get on without his friends in the good old homely place?

From Pastor Kortsen's explanation, it has already appeared that it was at Aunt Lene's instance they had taken up the question of the journey to Jutland. The captain had now for the first time heard of his daughter's needing change or enlivenment, for she always showed him her brightest face; he therefore thought it rather selfish of his sister that she wished to take the girl with her, nor could he understand why she had thrust Pastor Kortsen forth as a screen; it was not like her, unless the approach of age could alter people's characters for the worse. He could not help making her even feel this impression of his by his manner; hence the cheerfulness and peace which usually distinguished the captain's house were for the time not a little overshadowed.

Madame Kortsen was particularly in ill humor, and at last it burst forth as she was walking in the garden with Mrs. Stainforth two days after the pastor's departure. Having made some remarks on the controller's courtship and the unpleasant situation in which his proposal placed Ida, she repeated her assertion that it

would be a good thing for Ida to leave home for a little. Mrs. Stainforth, on the other hand, thought this awkwardness would soon pass, and that it was not worth while to run away from home about the matter. Gradually they became rather warm, one word drawing forth another, till at last the mother was plainly told that her girl had been foolish enough to fall in love with Walde-mar Krone, who, it seemed, was constantly in her thoughts; that she dreamt about him at night, evidently, and appeared to sigh for him all day, so that, at any rate, heart-sickness was telling on the strength of the poor child. Madame Kortsen relentlessly unwound the whole clew, following up the thread to Ida's childhood and the unlucky correspondence, at the same time reproaching her sister-in-law for not having perceived this before. Here at home, naturally every stone and every spot must remind Ida of her playmate, the hero of her childhood; therefore new surroundings would do good, and she might meet some one else in fresh scenes to drive young Krone altogether from her mind.

Mrs. Stainforth felt herself sorely hurt at learning that others had seen more clearly in a matter which lay so near to her; next she expressed her indignation that Ida had confided in others and not in her own mother. But Aunt Lene informed her that Ida had not opened her heart to any one, and that it was only the other night at Randrupgaard that an expression had escaped her to Clara Bruun which had made them certain of the accuracy of their former conjectures. It was Clara who had set on foot the whole scheme of this journey, and Aunt Lene now bitterly repented having allowed herself to be used as the instrument; only Clara had thought it best for all parties that the unfortunate attachment should not come to light.

"I have gone stupidly to work," said Madame Kortsen in conclusion; "and when I think rightly over the whole affair, I am tempted to believe that we do Ida injustice. She is probably not so silly as to go about sighing after a man who is quite beyond her reach."

"Silly!" answered Mrs. Stainforth with warmth; "what is silly in it? Is not Ida in every respect as good as Waldemar? Is not she fitted to fill any position? I can guess well enough that there was an attachment between them, but it speaks only the more for my girl's heart that so fine and promising a young man is its choice, although courted by others!"

"Then I must remind you, Trine, that not long ago you regarded the family of Krone as something very superior to your own, even differing on this point from the opinion of your husband. In the next place, you may bethink yourself that this fine and promising young man now lives in the great world, and possibly does not care a pin about Ida, or any one else in Stromby! But whatever you do, let the matter rest between us two. Tell Christian himself nothing of it whatever."

When natures usually tranquil are roused, they are so to some purpose. The mild and gentle Catherine Stainforth became now extremely angry, and said she would allow no one but her husband to dictate to her how to act; she forbade any interference in the matter by anybody, and went hastily into the house, slamming the door behind her in fine style.

Good Aunt Lene shook her head as she went up to her chamber, where, with many a "hem!" and "alas!" she set to work to pack her trunks for the journey in question.

"This falling in love has raised the devil," said she to herself. "Here have we, two old fools, been nearly quarreling about such a silly affair. I never could have believed that I should long to quit Stromby."

The conversation between Clara and Ida, to which Madame Kortsen alluded, had indeed taken place the same evening when they were last together at Randrupgaard. Clara was Ida's only intimate friend; but although the latter really stood in need of sympathy, and although she cherished unbounded confidence in Clara Bruun, she had never by a single word revealed her feelings toward Waldemar Krone. Not the less her senti-

ments were discovered, but Clara's nature was too refined to press upon Ida, and she had therefore no distinct notion of the strength of the passion. On that evening Clara had amused herself in bantering Ida a little about the controller's courtship.

"So, Petersen is still a knightly and indefatigable wooer, Ida," said she. "Did you notice lately, at the sheriff's, he quitted his beloved game at *hombre* to sit near you, stare at you, and sniff—yes, sniff at intervals everlastingly? Has Mrs. Pastor Bek in vain told you about the silver service, and the many other grand things, not forgetting that elegant antique toilet mirror, which Petersen's deceased first wife left to him,—his angel, as he so prettily calls her? Shall its polished surface never reflect the image of another Mrs. Petersen,—a new angel, in an *ormolu* frame?"

Instead of laughing at these satirical expressions, Ida had burst into a violent fit of weeping; however firm she was, the moment had yet come when she bowed beneath the constant struggle with her own heart, and Clara's eyes were completely opened. She then learned that Ida was unhappy, but was so far from condemning her, that she rather admired the self-command which her friend had so long shown. It did not come to a perfect explanation, but enough was said to arouse the lively concern of Clara, who, besides, from her own observation, and some previous confidential communications of Madame Kortsen's, knew enough about the matter to be able to spare Ida a full confession. Clara sought to cheer her friend, and to turn her from her scheme of becoming a teacher, but did not then unfold a plan which during this conversation had occurred to her. Pastor Kortsen's unexpected arrival seemed to her a very happy chance, as it gave a fitting opportunity to get Ida a little out into the world, and yet put to sleep her educational project. What Ida had once resolved she often held to very obstinately; therefore Clara did not go the most direct way to work, and try to get Ida herself to devise this journey, but introduced the busi-

ness in so very diplomatic a manner that all the subsequent knots were soon brought upon the thread.

The worst difficulty, both to her and Madame Kortsen, had been the captain's initiation into the secret; but by the accomplishment of this object without their help, everything was brought right again. Mrs. Stainforth had a long and confidential conversation with her husband, in which the captain, after his wont, at once vigorously grasped the position of matters. He did not for a moment misunderstand Ida; he freely comforted and soothed his wife, and kept entirely to himself the bitter distress which possibly moved in his own breast. Without letting Ida guess that he knew the secret of her heart, he placed before her the journey to Jutland in such a light that she herself was disposed for it; and as she then—with an innocent confidence that tried his self-control greatly—communicated to him her plan of becoming a teacher, he entirely approved of it as an object to keep in view, but begged her just to wait another year, and in the mean time to be preparing herself for the duties of such an occupation. There was no harm, besides, he said, in weighing such a resolve well, before going on to its execution.

For Mrs. Stainforth the few remaining days which Ida spent at home became in one way a happy time. She was cheered as if she had lost her daughter and found her again; now she understood Ida, could soothe and encourage her, and this she did in the tenderest and most judicious manner possible. By now and then recalling days of childhood, and speaking in her own placid gentle way about Waldemar Krone when he was with them, refreshing several merry recollections, and, at the right point, dwelling on the sadder ones, she brought up from the past all that was most tranquilizing. As to the forcing herself into Ida's confidence, or reasoning about her attachment to Krone, the captain had expressly dissuaded her from attempting that, as something which could only make the evil worse. Yet still Ida had a presentiment that her feelings were discovered, without owning it to herself.

Ida's mother was not, however, so composed as she appeared.

"It has taken deep hold on her, Christian," said she on the last evening to her husband. "How her eyes sparkled when I spoke about him! Ah, what will it come to, my dear?"

"It is all in God's hands, Trine; do not torment yourself with excessive anxiety. It is not impossible that she may yet forget him, and that is the best end for the affair."

"The best? Surely not! Do you know any young girl that can stand comparison with Ida?"

"Now, Trine, what an absurd way of talking!" said the postmaster, with some attempt at a smile. "When only *I* am present, it may do,—but,—well, no more can be said. Ida is—Ida, our sweet child; God keep her and guide her safe into port!"

At last the pastor returned, and that to find the result with secret triumph. His irrepressible cheerfulness was, after all, a great comfort on that last evening, which would otherwise have passed but drearily. He spoke enough to fill up all gaps in the conversation, and might even have been thought to carry in his pocket a new sermon in favor of making the best of things; his text being the beautiful, healthy situation of Bonderup, his illustrations drawn from the whole district around it. The map was brought out, and he showed the many gentlemen's seats in the neighborhood,—Gyldenholdt, Dyrland, but particularly Tiornholm, whose woods touched the boundary of the church-glebe, stretching away down to the sea. Lastly, he expressed the hope that father, mother, and Frederica would come to Bonderup in spring to visit him and bring home Ida, which the captain most decidedly engaged to do, thereby lightening Ida's oppressed heart.

When the hour for taking leave had struck, and for the first time she was about to leave her dearest friends, all her courage left her. How gladly would she not, at the last moment, have taken off her traveling dress and

stayed at home! But now they had got into the coach; there stood her mother, smiling through her tears, and her father doing marvels to seem cheerful, but still not quite succeeding in hiding his grave emotions; there stood Frederica, laughing and crying by turns, not able to realize that Ida was going away, though she had asked them all more than once, in the course of these days, and asked Clara Bruun besides, what it all meant. There stood also Bruun, looking as cheerful and contented as usual, and pointing down to his feet to show the pastor that out of regard for him he had put on the incomparable india-rubber shoes. Lastly, the faithful Brask was also there, looking both vexed and mystified, as if against his will he took part in some misfortune. Now, the coachman cracked his whip, and the coach rolled out of the town, while Ida looked back and continued to nod as long as she could discern any of her dear friends.

Thus they arrived at Copenhagen, and the next morning at half-past five they were on board the steamboat. The pastor was all life and activity; Aunt Lene all anxiety about her many bags and boxes—moreover, full of exasperation at the coarse and careless seamen. At last the scream of the engine ceased, as it got into full operation; there was waving of hats and pocket-handkerchiefs, the wheels began to splash in the water, and the *Iris* proudly turned her course northward.

When the ship began to move, and left the shore at a distance, Ida was seized with a strange fear: she felt as if she should never see home again. She had been stunned by the suddenness of the journey, but now, as she quietly thought over the last occurrences of the week, the veil fell entirely from her eyes. Clara had probably betrayed what she knew, and her parents had penetrated her secret; she was not sent to Jutland merely to amuse herself, but to forget something, to be cured of a passion which they all considered hopeless. Did this feeling, then,—which for so long a time had been half her life, and of which she had been even

secretly proud,—conceal more selfishness than she herself knew? Had she thought too much of herself and too little of her friends? Enough that the sentiment which at first had lain in her dreams, like a child in the cradle, had now grown up and stepped forth into life as an event.

On the evening of the next day they reached Bonderup, and Lise Kortsen was agreeably surprised by the visit of her sister-in-law, with the accompaniment she received in the captain's eldest and best-beloved daughter.

Ida soon began to feel herself at home in the parsonage; the charming country round it was a source of great enjoyment to her; the solitary walks through the glorious beech-forests of Tiornholm to the Fisher's Cape by the sea, were her best solace; and she often sat there and looked out, over the sparkle of the surges, to the east, where were all she loved best. There was now a quiet in her dreams, which made these lonely hours something of the happiest she had experienced for a long time; for while we are young, fancy can cast a mild halo even over our sorrows, and if the naked reality at certain moments has terrified us, we are soon able to color it with the distance.

About a fortnight after the arrival at Bonderup, she was coming home alone from the Fisher's headland, down the pretty forest-path which leads to the minister's field. All was very still, and the variegated autumnal leaves fell singly and noiselessly to the ground; the sun stood low in the heavens, his rays darting like golden arrows through the shades of the wood. The splendor dazzled her so that she did not at first notice a form which stood in the path. It was that of the worthy pastor himself, gilded on one side by the setting sun, while his countenance beamed moreover with a brightness which shone from within.

"Now you appear at last, my little hermit!" cried he. "I think you will soon build you a hut on the Fisher-

man's headland! Choose now—the right hand or the left!”

The pastor held both hands at his back, and Ida chose the right, but she got the left along with it; for he had a thick letter in each hand, and this was the first news she got from home. The dispatches were rich in contents, for in the one envelope there were letters from father, mother, and Frederica, in the other, a very long epistle from Clara.

She first read the letters from home, and was delighted with her mother's circumstantial account of how all matters stood at the post-house. Next Clara's, which also diverged into a description of the state of matters at Stromby. The controller, Clara narrated, still sniffed, and said “Hm, hm” incessantly over Ida's departure; and Mrs. Pastor Bek was much piqued. For the present there was a cessation of arms, that is to say, on Cupid's part; but it would probably not be long before the commencement of a new campaign, to win a bride for the Controller of Customs. There were plenty to choose among, especially among ladies of a certain age, and she hoped soon to be able to send Ida tidings of a victory won by the allies. There was, however, a passage in Clara's letter which particularly took Ida's attention; it ran thus:

“Bruun was lately in Copenhagen, and met Walde-
mar Krone on the street; he looked brisk and happy,
and had an unusually long talk with my husband, whom
he begged to give his compliments to all at Stromby,
each individually.”

This apparently accidental reference Clara could not have written down without consideration. Why had she, then, done so? Certainly she had reflected that it was not at all a good thing that our hero lived in Ida's thoughts as a god surrounded by the halo of imagination; she thought it would do Ida no harm to hear his name mentioned, and himself spoken about as an ordinary mortal. How far she was right in this is a question; the words stood there, and gave her friend much

satisfaction. When Ida next day sat down to write, she took up the pen with the resolution that her letter should be cheerful; and in mastering her feelings she obtained the natural reward. She described her new place of abode, its comforts, and the beauty of the surrounding country, and spoke much of Aunt Lise's amiability. To Clara she talked about a visit she had paid to the old and widowed Mrs. Resen at Tiornholm; they had spent the whole evening there, and Ida had made the acquaintance of a very agreeable young lady of rank, Countess Adelaide Gyldenholdt, sister to Count Wilhelm of the place. Ida promised herself much from this acquaintance, for the countess had a very friendly and unaffected manner, and, in Ida's opinion, was very handsome.

"I felt myself unusually drawn toward her," wrote Ida; "there is something so genuine, so good, and healthfully intelligent about her; but what especially opened my heart to her was, that she not a little, both in mind and manner, reminds me of you, my own true Clara!"

Ida's letters made glad hearts at the post-house, and when Clara saw that the journey bore such good fruits, she rejoiced over her work.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HOUR-GLASS IS TURNED.

THE countess had gone to Jutland with her father, and had taken the sun, moon, and all the stars along with her; it was empty and dark for our hero in Copenhagen. True, no change was observable in his mode of life; he still studied *belles-lettres*, chatted with his uncle, and listened to his good counsel; he went out as before to walk, to see the play, to mingle in evening-parties;

but he no longer played his part *con amore*, and the scene appeared to him as faded and tarnished as a theater by daylight, when, with the festive lighting-up of the night, all illusion is gone.

The countess had departed without any explanation having taken place between them, without his having received any express invitation to visit Gyldenholdt; and he was thus not one step nearer his object than before. He often went out through Frederiksberg Avenue, where the handsome villa now stood empty and deserted, the withered leaves whirling round about it as over the tombstone of his hopes; and yet it was his persuasion that if the countess loved any one, she felt that sentiment for himself.

"How capricious and unaccountable women are!" exclaimed he, when he thought over the last fortnight of the Countess Fransiska Gyldenholdt's stay in town; and in truth, if Waldemar Krone preferred the piquant, his taste was amply gratified. After a day or two of cordial, natural conduct toward him, the goddess had suddenly veiled herself in a cloud; she had drawn back, and remained calm and cold till toward the close; then, when a pensiveness at parting should have come in, an unpardonable gayety marked her.

"You are glad to leave town, countess?" thus said Waldemar to her, one of the last evenings they were together at Count Ferdinand's. "You have certainly got very weary of the city."

"Ah, I long for the view from my quiet little boudoir at Gyldenholdt—for my rides through the great pine-wood; yes, I really long for the horses and dogs, and,—shall I confess it? yes,—an occasional game at billiards!"

"Perhaps your ladyship also goes a-hunting?"

"Unfortunately, no; but my father has taught me to use a pistol, and we sometimes shoot a little at a mark. How exciting it is when the bullet flies, and Klos, the marker, calls out that his lady has very nearly hit the center!"

"Yes, I can easily imagine the countess with a pistol in her hands; it must become her well! It is really very suitable to you."

"Am I, then, so masculine in appearance?"

"No: but you have by nature cruel instincts, and a murderous weapon easily poises itself in your hands."

"What a terrible accusation against a poor, harmless, peace-loving girl!"

"You have slain me many times, Fransiska," murmured Waldemar passionately, "and I have each time greater pain in coming to life again. Would to heaven that you only let me lie dead there!"

"And so you are scandalized at my cheerfulness; you think, I suppose, that one with so much on her conscience should be humble and repentant?"

"I long for a little cordiality—to see you as you were but a fortnight since. Now you are going home, and I—I shall be forgotten. Out of sight, out of mind!"

"You really have nice ideas of me! Gentlemen know nothing about resignation; that virtue they may learn from us weak women. They are really like children, who must now and then get a lump of sugar to make them good."

"Oh, give me one then!"

"Ha, ha! You, at all events, are always consistent and like yourself—one can't get off from you!"

"How you trifle with me!" he exclaimed. "It would not take much to content me, but I *must* have a little kindness from you. When you go to Gyldenholdt, and once more take your seat as queen-regnant in your little court——"

"Yes, *then* I promise you! Ask the Herr Sass if I do not indeed reign at Gyldenholdt!"

"But will you now and then think of me?"

"You deserve that I should really take back the withered rose from you again. You know very well that I do not so easily forget you, Waldemar; but now don't take an affecting farewell of me, as if we should

never see each other more. Come, let us go in again beside the others."

When she was gone, it was still endurable in the city as long as Count Wilhelm was there; but when he also, in the middle of November, went off to Gyldenholdt to join in the hunting and spend Christmas with his mother and uncle, then Waldemar's time of endurance in reality began.

One fine starlight night toward the close of the month of November he went through Amalie Street, out to the esplanade. Here he stood for some time by the bulwark, looking out over the sea, which rippled against the stone pier, and with its monotonous music made an accompaniment to his dreams. He thought of that morning when at the custom-house he had taken leave of Fransiska. How enchanting she looked at that last moment! How tasteful was her toilet, even when in her traveling dress! Yes, she was always like herself; she was one of those rare people about whom one never sees anything ugly.

He had been eager to see how she would take leave of him in the presence of so many people,—as not merely her uncle's large family were present, but a crowd of acquaintances of the higher circles, and especially the three indefatigables, Cederborn, Hagenfurth, and Boldt. Was he obliged to content himself with a general farewell, or could he expect a special one? She first took leave of her uncle, her aunt, cousins, Count Wilhelm, and the ladies present; then she replied to the compliments of the gentlemen with her usual grace, including those of the three inevitable gallants; but on the stair stood Mr. von Krone, and—he had feared already that he was quite overlooked, which wounded him so much the more, as Cederborn, Hagenfurth, and Boldt stood opposite; for of late they had an eye to our hero, whom for a long time they had regarded as quite a harmless person, till various little circumstances enlightened them. But in going past him the countess gave him her hand. How he trembled as the little rose-

colored glove appeared outside the muff! And she said, in a very friendly manner, to him:

"Adieu, Mr. von Krone! Many regards from me to your good uncle."

He flushed all over with pleasure, and observed that the three cavaliers exchanged looks, and that one of the foreign diplomatists present eyed him through his opera-glass. This little triumph had swelled his passion up to its old height, and the separation was now doubly bitter. That squeeze of the hand in the presence of so many people he valued very highly, perhaps too much; at least the friendly indifference which the countess assumed did not look as if her mind were agitated by love. Apparently she took leave of him just as she did of her cousin; there might be a pre-eminence, but still, for a lover, a doubtful one. Perhaps she did it mostly on account of his uncle, since the old gentleman was a special favorite; but Waldemar thought he obtained from her fine eyes one glance, transient and unobserved by the others, yet auspicious to his devotion. She took leave of him apparently in the style of mere friendship,—but was not this still an evidence of her favor, as she could not but know he would lay stress on it? As the encouragement, too, was given only then, she might have been but guarding herself carefully to the last moment, lest he demanded too much for her to give; it saved him, at all events, from rashness or presumption. And after all, the whole peculiarity of her conduct was ascribable to her haughty father.

Here was he now, with these eager remembrances, chained to the city like Prometheus to the rock! Count Wilhelm, indeed, in the presence of the Lehnsgreve himself, had again invited him to come and see Dyrland; but the old nobleman was ever chary of his own special invitations, and on this occasion had remained quite passive. Waldemar had therefore decided, though it cost him much in this instance to follow his uncle's counsel, to excuse himself with thanks to his friends, replying that he could not in winter leave the chamber-

lain alone at home, as the health of the latter was somewhat feeble.

While sunk in meditation over all these reminiscences, he forgot both time and place, and had remained long motionless on the same spot; when a young man, with a pale and by no means handsome countenance, reddish hair, and light-blue eyes, came up to him on the pier. After several ineffectual attempts to draw his attention, the new-comer at last said:

"You are surely a great admirer of marine scenery, Mr. Krone?" but instantly added, in a deferential tone, "pray excuse the question—but you were so deeply abstracted that I in vain tried to catch your eye."

"I beg your pardon, baron," said Waldemar, recognising him; "I was, indeed, far away in thought."

"If you have no objection," rejoined the other, "suppose we take a short turn together to revive you?"

The answer unavoidably was that it would give him much pleasure, though certainly in his own mind Krone thought—

"So much for the reputation of being good natured!"

Baron Malte, who was three or four years older than Waldemar, had made his acquaintance that season, as they were often brought together in good circles. The baron, indeed, from his awkward, sensitive manner, did not make a very important figure there, nor draw much attention.

"Fine weather this evening," remarked Malte, after looking around to certify the observation.

"Yes, very fine, baron," Waldemar agreed.

"If you would be so good, Krone," said his companion, "call me simply as I do you, by the plain surname. The title is sometimes almost loathsome to me."

"That is rather singular, my dear sir," answered Krone with a smile.

"When I meet a man I esteem, the eternal baron grates on my ears, and—I like to converse with you."

Waldemar Krone had never before spoken alone with the baron, and, truth to tell, had taken very little notice

of him; he looked up, at the hearty tone in which the last words were spoken, and it struck him for the first time that the baron had a pair of unusually expressive eyes, though otherwise he was far from possessing external advantages.

"I have often feared," continued Malte, after a pause, "that my society might weary you—as it does everybody else. I feel myself solitary in the world, Krone."

"It must be your own choice if you do not win friends, I am sure, baron!" said Waldemar with an effort to be complimentary.

"Ah, there again—courtesy and—and the old system forever," returned the eccentric Von Malte emphatically. "They are to be won—yes, but how, Krone? By purchase, by interest, selfishness—always a something in return! Be the price a loan, a good dinner, or even merely a good cigar, the result is still the same, dear Krone." The odd young baron turned a wistful glance on his new companion, but then shyly looked away around them.

"You are too distrustful, my good friend," Krone warmly said.

"That may be, but there is an unlucky star over me and all that I undertake. Are you a fatalist, Krone? Do you believe in a destiny already determined?"

"I am certainly inclined to imagine it."

"And so you undoubtedly feel that you are fated to success; I can see it in your handsome, confident face. I, on the other hand, cherish the persuasion that I am fated to ill luck."

"Pshaw, my dear Malte! Where have you got those dark views? You are young, rich——"

"Stop, so far we are agreed; I am young and rich, but neither active nor handsome. Even my health is but middling."

"You look at everything in a dark light."

"True, there has always been darkness over my race and house—where, then, should I get bright views? You cannot think how unwillingly I go home to Soborg;

it has always been a dismal place of abode to me. I like town better, with all its faces that cannot become known to me."

"Then don't leave it—don't go home to Soborg. You are certainly your own master."

"My guardian wishes me now and then to reside on the estate, and I do not wish to displease him."

"Hm! When a friend is ready-made for us," assented Waldemar, "'tis as well to keep hold."

They had now come to Nyboder, and the baron stopped outside of one of the small houses there. Through its lighted windows they could contemplate the whole family seated round a table, to eat their supper of fried meat and steaming potatoes. The mother, a young woman with a simple round face, was busy at the table; while the children, anxious to receive their portions, wistfully followed her movements with their eyes. The man, like one fresh from work, had begun to eat heartily, but looked up as he told his wife something which seemed to amuse her. She laid down the knife and laughed till her mirth spread about the group, and her husband's rough brown visage shone all over with the glee he had brought.

"What a pretty scene!" exclaimed the baron, and as they went on, he said: "I should like, Krone, to be in that sailor's place."

"A whimsical wish, Malte," laughed his new friend, "and, I must say, rather equivocal as to——"

"How healthy, joyous, and confident was his aspect! Did he not look like a man who is in his right position, and quite fulfills his mission?"

"He seems to be a smart chap, and he has a nice wife."

"And I, on the contrary—hm—I am, in truth, afraid to explain myself to you, for you will certainly laugh at me."

"Not at all, dear baron—ah, I mean dear Malte!"

"You have always impressed me, Krone, as a right-minded, generous man, so much so, that although you

are some years my junior, you awaken in me the same confidence as if you were older and had more experience, as perhaps you really have. I feel so keen a necessity for some one to confide in."

"Speak freely out; you may safely count upon my silence."

"Yes, you will scarcely have much pleasure in it, but I set off to-morrow for Funen, and we shall probably not see each other again for some time, so that I shall not soon put your patience to further proof. This sailor is happier than I, for I am not in the right place. Sometimes it seems to me that I have become Lehnsgreve by mistake—I am much better suited for a far humbler position. When in company with many gentlemen, I am plagued with humiliating thoughts, which come I know not whence. Must I not have been intended for a sexton, an office-messenger, a butler?—don't you think I might at any rate have made a tolerably good butler? Ha, ha! I suppose I am bound to laugh!"

"Are you well enough to-night, baron? Are you not a little feverish?" asked his hearer seriously.

"No, Krone; I possess all my five senses, such as they are. I do not always feel so, but I *have* such moments."

"That arises, doubtless, from your indifferent health, else it would be unnatural."

"For you, perhaps, but not for me; besides, you must not suppose that this is altogether my own opinion."

"Who on earth could have the insolence to hint such things to you?"

"Well, my guardian has told me as much, though not so broadly. I heard it for the first time in plain words from—my own father. He cried out to me in wrath that the meanest peasant on the estate was better fitted to be the lord of it than I. You can have no idea," continued the baron, after a pause, "how unhappy my family has been in the last three generations. There

was discord between my great-grandfather, Baron Anton, and my grandfather, Baron Eberhard; it came sometimes to open hostility, and the old people on the estate can tell ugly stories on this subject. My father himself was harshly treated; thus, Baron Eberhard once lashed him with a dog-whip because, when they were beating the bushes, he quitted his post and a drove of game escaped. Another time, it was my grandfather's meerschau pipe that had been dropped, and although it was a whole Danish mile back to Soborg by the way they had ridden, and my father was a grown-up man, my grandfather sent him back to seek it, nor dared he return till it was found. These are but absurd little samples of family history, which, the further it is explored, the more it resembles some fantastic Niebelungen of household discord and caprice—too often, alas, tragic!"

"Do you not think that such stories, in descending orally from generation to generation, are much exaggerated?"

"No; I believe, on the contrary, that if single facts are exaggerated, still in the whole tradition the representations are more favorable than the reality. My great-grandfather, grandfather, and father were all stiff-necked to a degree beyond modern conception. I, on the other hand, am only too soft in temper; what hardened them has only broken me down. How painful it is, Krone, only to be able to think of one's father with terror! My parents lived unhappily together, and as a child I have been witness to scenes at Soborg which I cannot forget. My mother, who died early, loved me; but my father—God forgive him for it—I think he hated me. It is now four years since he died, and he was not conscious at the last, otherwise I will still assume that I should have heard a friendly word from his lips before he departed. If I had only a brother, or rather a sister, yes, a sister! I should be happier; but when I am at Soborg, and walk about alone in the great deserted house, I feel as if all good angels quitted me. How should one shake such things off, Krone?"

"The best means is certainly activity. When you are on your estate, take the management of it."

"Yet—there we have it! I have not been educated at all for my position. I don't say that I have learnt nothing, but I don't know how to use what I know as manager of an estate."

"That will come afterward."

"I cannot set my mind to it. My guardian certainly means well toward me, but he has no confidence in me, and manages the property entirely himself. I have no practical insight, and must at once give in to every objection. In about a year I shall be of age, but what a life I shall then lead! I foresee that the steward of my estate, my forester, and all my servants will come to rule each in his own corner, and that I shall vex myself about it, without being able to prevent it."

"You have too clear a perception of your weakness, baron, not to be able to resist it; use this last year of your minority well, and try to acquire a knowledge of business."

"I have not entirely given up hope, and I have quietly been observant of many things; but the difficulty is just that I have been weighed in the balances and found wanting. My guardian will not give up the reins, and you see I can do nothing without the skill to guide the vehicle myself."

"You must not be too sensitive, Malte," urged his young counselor. "Every man in your position is of course obliged to depute a degree of authority to his servants, at least of a certain grade, but each only in his own department."

"Well, my friend, I have talked too long about myself, and put your patience too severely to the proof; but it has done me good to be able for once to speak out to you."

"We are not done with it yet, my dear baron! I will give you a good advice in conclusion: you must marry! See that you get a nice, amiable wife."

"That is easier said than done; I have seen ladies enough who would take me for what I possess, but not one who would have me for my own sake."

"There, the demon of distrust appears again. How, then, may I ask, will you ever persuade yourself that your future bride takes you for your own sake?"

"It is most likely that I shall never marry; and yet I once felt in love, and that too for a lady who truly did not need my fortune. And I was so silly as to think that I had made some impression on her, until my eyes were opened; but I hear there are many more like me. The lady I allude to is very handsome, very clever, very haughty—so haughty can she be at times that I should hardly ever have had the courage to approach her if she had not drawn me toward her. Why did she do that? Probably from curiosity, and for pastime. I was a new figure on the scene, and—doubtless a comic one."

"You possess a rare talent for self-discipline, my good baron! If we lived five or six hundred years further back in the world's history, I would counsel you to give your means to the church, and with a Bible and a scourge withdraw to a hut in the forest. You might then become a saint—St. Martin—for your name is Martin, is it not?"

"Martin Malte; two M's, it is true! and I have among the rest an axe as a weapon, but I only use it to hew firewood. My doctor advised me to saw and cut every day, first one fagot of sticks, then two, then three; it was to produce strength and appetite."

"What Philistian advice! You can certainly ride and hunt; that is a very different and an enlivening mode of taking exercise. It is no wonder that you grow melancholy, if you really every day stand and cut firewood—ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes, a wood-cutting baron is really tragic-comic! It is no wonder that I could not win my fair lady's heart; but now I have got over that."

"I should like to know who this proud beauty is, unless it is a secret?"

"Not at all; it was Fransiska Gyldenholdt. I had really a glorious time while in love; it brought a strange excitement, and the days blew by like clouds."

"Fransiska Gyldenholdt!" repeated Waldemar in prolonged amaze.

"Yes, you will thus be able to comprehend that I did not suffer from *ennui* when in favor; she knows indeed how to keep her worshipers in breath, and her power resembles witchcraft itself—but she really is exceedingly attractive. I well remember one of the last times that she honored me with a little *tête-à-tête*. It was in one of those crowded parties, with only room to stand—a hideous invention, between you and me—that she made room for me on a sofa beside her. 'To-night I must have a little talk with you, baron!' said she. 'Merri-ment is not to be thought of in this social petrification, but a little melancholy may thrive well enough in a corner of the saloon. Now, how goes it with you, my dear pupil?' and we talked in that strain for at least half an hour. For you must understand that the countess once, when I complained of my guardian, offered to become my tutor; though, as she said I always whined to her, she soon became weary of the office."

"Ha, ha!" laughed Waldemar. "I can easily imagine the whole."

"Of course she fooled me a little, but I did not resent it; I was, on the contrary, very unhappy as soon as she gave me up; but on closer reflection, and by observing her in a calmer frame of mind, I was entirely cured of my passion."

"Indeed—how so?"

"Oh, I found that she lost in my eyes on closer acquaintance!"

"'They are sour!' said the fox of the grapes;" such was Waldemar's comment on the discovery, with a feeble attempt to be jocose.

"No, that does not apply at all here. Has it never struck you that she wants one thing, and that the most important? She wants heart; I don't mean by that

mere good nature, but any genuineness of feeling. She is too bold for me."

"You don't truly know her, Baron Malte."

"Ah, yes, tolerably well! With her brilliant face I am as familiar as with a book I have read many times, and in the most varied moods. Have you never observed that it can, in the most beautiful manner, express gladness, triumph, love, humor, wrath, defiance—everything but sadness; and yet nothing is more becoming to a woman. The most charming trait is thus absent."

"There, I think, you do her wrong; I have seen an expression of great distress in her fine eyes."

"Indeed—then she must love you!"

"Love me, baron!"

"Yes, true love is always humble. I own it would be a proud thought to see Fransiska Gyldenholdt at one's feet. Does it then tempt you, Krone?"

"I don't understand you," answered Waldemar, half flattered, half offended.

"Don't be angry, Krone, but it really is no secret that you pay court to the countess; just to-day I heard Hagenfurth talk of it."

"And what did he say?"

"Ah—I won't tell you that; he is very angry, very jealous of you."

"Tell me what he said; it is quite a matter of indifference to me what it was. You can't think I should be angry at such an old fool as Hagenfurth."

"Is it, then, nothing to hear of being termed a raw country boy and a green-horn? No! I will merely tell you that my view of the case was rather singular, but I declared it, while laughed at for my pains. My avowed opinion was that she is not worthy of you. You are certainly a man of high feeling, while she is a selfish, superficial child of the world. Excuse my plainness of speech! I say it because I speak from experience, though perhaps I am the only one of her admirers who congratulates himself on his dismissal."

Waldemar heard the baron's words with very mingled

feelings. At the beginning of their conversation he had felt himself quite the superior of the good baron, but from the moment that the countess was mentioned, came his turn to feel humbled. Not merely did it make an unpleasant impression on him that the baron spoke with such settled indifference about the lady he adored, and who was the aim of his highest ambition. It was an idea which had never occurred to him, that there was any man in a condition to marry, who would not envy him the hand of the beautiful, high-born, wealthy Countess of Gyldenholdt if he won it; and now he had met with such a philosopher in the reserved, desponding baron, whom he had always undervalued. He was thus keenly reminded of their respective positions. The baron was her equal in birth, and otherwise eligible as a suitor, let his personal appearance be as it might; but what other was Mr. Krone, despite his handsome face and figure, his courage and fine manner, than a person of no importance, fit only to be laughed at when his name was mentioned in connection with that of the Countess Gyldenholdt? The yawning gulf between Fransiska and him, which he had so often bridged in fancy, now widened, and the queen of his heart drew farther back. The two companions crossed the rampart, and had passed Norrepoint, when the baron suddenly said:

"How do you think of spending the evening?"

"Oh, I don't rightly know. I thought of perhaps visiting a friend of my early days whom I have not seen for a long time; he lives in this neighborhood."

"Where? Perhaps I know him too," said the baron.

"We can just see the light in his window—the dormer of that garret there, on the high yellow house."

"I did not think you had a friend in a garret. What is his name, and what is he?"

"His name is Jacob Frank, and he is a student; we were comrades at school."

"School-days—yes, I know," remarked Von Malte, with interest, "though I was only taught by a tutor, and that a harsh one. Your friend is amiable, is he?"

"That is perhaps not the proper expression; he is an excellent, honorable man, but rather an original."

"Ah, tell me a little more about him!"

"Can that amuse you? He is very studious, a real bookworm, and I almost believe a fortnight may elapse without his having any intercourse with his fellow-creatures beyond what is absolutely necessary. He is a great skeptic, is fond of disputing, and likes to oppose all possible authorities; he hates all distinctions of rank, title, nobility; and every evidence of sentiment he immediately sets down as affectation. He is himself particularly upright, and very fond of telling folks the truth; in short, he can be very offensive, but for all that he has a kind heart."

"That is just the man for me! I should like to make his acquaintance."

"That could hardly be effected; for if he hears that you are a baron, he will lock himself up and draw in his feelers, so that you and I would have to carry on the conversation by ourselves, and thus we may as well stay here on the ramparts."

"You asked me before if I had fever about me, Krone. There is really something in it; I am calm enough otherwise, but this evening I feel a strange desire to play some wild trick, or go through a little adventure. I have lost my equanimity from a slight vexation I had at dinner. Now, if we must play some mad prank, this is one of the most innocent we could hit upon,—that you take me with you to your interesting friend, and introduce me as Student Malte. What do you say to it?"

Waldemar laughed at the idea of mystifying Frank, and though such a joke might come a little unexpectedly, as they had not seen each other during four months, he yielded to the temptation.

"So be it, baron, but take care that you don't discover yourself."

"No fear of me; there is far greater danger of you, who, in spite of my request to the contrary, incessantly call me baron."

"I shall mostly play the dumb part, and amuse myself in observing how you get on with Frank."

They entered the door of the tall yellow house, groped their way up the dark stair, reached at last Frank's door, and knocked. Frank's well-known voice answered with a tardy "Come in!" the tone of which revealed that he was very seldom disturbed by visitors of this kind, and they thereupon entered the little smoky apartment. Their respected host lay all his length on the sofa, so that they could just see his feet and the tip of his nose; everything was enveloped in clouds of tobacco-smoke. He however hastily raised himself and exclaimed, in a tone more of wonder than hostility:

"Ah, Mr. Krone, good evening! This is really a surprise!"

"Good evening, Frank! May I introduce a friend of mine who wished to accompany me—Student Malte?"

Frank gathered his dressing-gown around him, and bowed in such an awkward manner that he looked as if he had a pain in his stomach. His face did not wear a happier expression, and the baron, whose forced courage, even while on the stairs, had fallen several degrees, became quite crest-fallen, paid his respects with much embarrassment, and quite forgot to be amused at the reception, though it surpassed the description given beforehand. Frank stood now with therossest of expressions on his face, while he unfolded his pocket-handkerchief as if to conceal it in part, and seemed speculating, as he blew his nose, what to make of the two visitors; when, unfortunately for him, the landlady's servant-girl came in at the same moment with the tea-tray. She too was evidently surprised to see guests with the student, and these two so genteel-looking; accordingly her lively brown eyes directed a glance of inquiry at Mr. Frank.

"Will you be kind enough to sit down, gentlemen?" asked Frank reluctantly, blushing meanwhile to the roots of his hair. "You might perhaps—that is to say, a—I mean, drink a cup of tea?"

"Yes, thank you," answered Waldemar; "we have

had a pretty long walk; I dare say Mr. Malte may feel thirsty—at least I do.”

“Then you must put up with very meager fare,” was the somewhat ungracious answer, without seeming to notice Annie’s nod of intelligence, which evidenced her willingness to fetch an additional supply. He took out a brown rye-loaf, a homely jar of butter, and a piece of cracked cheese, whose last moisture had obviously left it; the girl having brought of her own accord two cups and saucers, with teaspoons to match, to which she modestly added the question, “Please, do you wish anything else, Mr. Frank?” Bluntly replying in the negative, the latter gave her an impatient sign of dismissal, and set himself most uncomfortably to do the honors of his tea-table.

“It was stupid, though,” said he when Annie had left, “that I did not ask the girl to cut some bread; I am a clumsy fellow at such things.”

The confession was enforced by the crooked slices he dropped on the plate, and the baron had sufficiently recovered himself to offer assistance, perhaps with some recollection of his anxiety to prove fit for subordinate offices.

“Permit me, Mr. Frank, though no master of the art—indeed ’tis long since I performed it—still I should like very much to try.”

“See,” he continued, with a proportionate excess of satisfaction, “I don’t do it so very ill; but one must take time, and not go round about, else the thumb runs a risk! There is an art here, as everywhere,—always make your slice equal: really, it leads one on!” And so Von Malte went on to cut and cut, until at last Frank ventured to remark that now there was surely enough.

“It is such a real enjoyment to help one’s self,” said the incautious baron, brushing the crumbs from his waistcoat, and seating himself again on the sofa.

“Are you not, then, used to that?” asked their shy entertainer, more directly eyeing his new guest.

"No—well, not as a rule. You must know that I—I own a farm in Funen, which I inherit from my father, and, as I was a rich man's son, I was dreadfully spoilt in my childhood."

"So it struck me, sir," returned the student pointedly.

"You mean—ah," Von Malte stammered—"I trust, sir, I have not——"

"Don't take it ill, Mr. Malte; but I guessed at once that in one way or other you were an aristocrat; which, to tell the truth, I should have concluded from the single fact of your coming in Krone's company."

"Ha, ha! It does not seem to be any recommendation in your eyes to be an aristocrat."

"I am the better pleased, Mr. Malte, that I can reckon you only, it seems, among the aristocracy of wealth. Certainly I do not favor this aristocracy, but yet it is more natural and rational than the hereditary folly of noble birth."

"Still, pray observe," rejoined Von Malte argumentatively, "that I have not earned wealth, but inherited it; and thus cannot escape your charge of folly. Besides, what harm have the unhappy nobility done you?"

"They have not done me any; they usually do *nothing*—they are mere drones."

"That is a heavy accusation when it is made general. Since you judge them with such certainty, Mr. Frank, you must have a very extensive and intimate acquaintance with the nobility."

"I don't know a single individual among them."

"Indeed?—then you have read it in the papers—ha, ha!" The baron here tried to excuse his laugh by a subsequent extreme of gravity.

"Although I don't go about with these gentlemen," answered Frank, somewhat irritated, "I may still form a correct enough idea about them."

"Now, Mr. Frank, let us be equitable. Of course there are idlers in all grades, but scarcely more among men of rank than among others. There is many a nobleman I should wish to resemble."

"You talk of their *rank*; happily such a term is no longer applicable. The category has ceased to exist among our institutions."

"Good; then call it a class, or whatever you like. To be honest with you, as a landowner myself, I may be fairly reckoned in this said class, and I have to rejoice you by the candid avowal that I am a drone indeed."

"What do you mean by that?"

"That I have learnt nothing useful. I have no energy, no activity, no occupation whatever, and am heartily weary of being rich."

"You have only got a gift of the spleen."

"Yes; if I were an English lord it would be called so."

"You must try and get something to do; this is the only cure for that malady. Take the management of your property."

"I have not the least desire to do so. Do you know what I take pleasure in?—why, making paper boxes; and this I flatter myself I do very well."

"If so, then sell your landed property and turn book-binder," answered Frank, at length brought to view the question humorously; and Waldemar Krone, who had listened with much interest to the conversation, joined the two in a burst of hearty merriment.

"Why, indeed, may I not yet enjoy life?" exclaimed the baron; "I have certainly most of the means for it. Yet I have traveled round Europe in vain. Enjoyment was either farther on by a post-station, or as far behind. You, Mr. Frank, who, as I hear, live so quiet and solitary here in your garret, are evidently far happier than I."

"Yes—yes," agreed Waldemar. "And would any one believe, Mr. Malte, that Frank is a rich man? He has means, and yet lives here like a hermit."

"No;—have you, then, really such means?" exclaimed the baron with simplicity. "It annoys me to hear it,—that is, I fancied you were a poor, struggling fellow, who maintained yourself painfully by teaching or the

like. I came up here to see a pattern of stoical virtue—to know and perhaps learn something from him!”

“Then you may console yourself with the fact that my income is no greater than barely to afford me the means of living here and studying. If that makes me a pattern of virtue, then I am one.”

“But you don’t mean me to infer, Mr. Frank, that you never enjoy life? To this incessant reading no one can hold out. You have certainly some group of friends,—you have attached yourself to some family circle or other,—you visit, surely? Or perhaps this extreme degree of application proceeds from your being engaged to some fair one?”

Frank declared, with a bitterness which frightened the baron from asking any more questions, that he neither had any circle, family, or sweetheart. But Waldemar Krone now came to the rescue, and led the conversation on to literature, music, and the theater, which gave the baron an opportunity of showing himself to great advantage. His opinions were sound, though simply expressed, and so propitiated the favor of Jacob Frank, that at last he awoke to fuller consciousness of the duties of a host, and summoned pretty Annie to procure for him a couple of bottles of wine and some oysters. Frank was, however, very ignorant in such matters, and his orders to Annie were so vague that the arch girl giggled, till Waldemar Krone interfered, and gayly set his friend right—that, too, in so graceful a manner, while he reproved Annie’s freedom so easily, yet pleasantly, that the latter could not but wish that Mr. Krone lodged in the attic instead of Mr. Frank.

“Krone is an experienced person,” remarked the baron, laughing.

“Perhaps too much so,” answered Frank; “I don’t like his way of looking on servants. I always treat these people as my equals.”

“You constrain yourself on their account, certainly, Frank,” answered Krone; “that is the thing. As to equals—hm—you don’t mean to say you treat Annie as

your equal? Do you bow to her when you meet her on the street? When you are lying here stretching yourself on the sofa, and Annie comes in, do you take down your legs, and raise yourself up, as you would if a lady entered? Politeness aside, your stiffness has thus no other effect than to make Annie laugh at you; whereas by a judicious treatment, you would get her to serve you promptly, and with good will."

"Annie is not my servant, but the landlady's," returned Frank. "In regard to what you call judicious treatment, the less said the better; I profess no knowledge of it as concerns female servants, and I think that Annie is better treated with my stiffness than with the admiring glances which you cast on her, and which she certainly seemed but too able to appreciate."

"Ha, ha!" laughed the baron; "there Mr. Frank touched you, friend Krone!"

"Nonsense! It must be a frightfully tedious piece of work for poor Annie to wait on such a Quaker as Frank."

Annie came quickly back with her errand, and was evidently much amused when Waldemar Krone, in spite of his host's protest, subjected her to a short examination concerning Mr. Frank's daily mode of life. Annie's answers afforded the baron great entertainment, and even Frank himself was obliged to laugh, though startled to find how slyly Annie had noticed all his peculiarities, while he imagined that she was only thinking of her daily business. Frank thus smarted for his manner of treating his merry-eyed attendant; but if Annie had only stayed near the door to listen a moment, she would have heard in turn how dangerous a person she was considered by the lodger in the attic; who added the remark, that he almost always expected for those in her class, when they had pretty faces, that a sorrowful end was in store.

After the three gentlemen had passed an hour pleasantly together, the baron rose suddenly to take leave, being about to set off early next day on the journey he had before referred to, for which he had still some things

to look after; but he begged Krone not to disturb himself because he was hurrying away. He thanked Frank for the pleasant evening he had spent with him, hoped he would keep his new friend, Baron Malte of Soborg, in kindly remembrance, and then went hurriedly out at the door, leaving Waldemar Krone to give a closer explanation. This was done as soothingly as possible for Frank's dignity, but still not quite graciously received; Frank declaring the concealment of the baron's title to have been a very poor, boyish trick.

It seemed as if when Von Malte went, he took all their host's good nature with him. Frank sat down opposite the friend of his childhood with so morose an expression on his face that it formed a striking contrast to the lively, genial countenance of Waldemar Krone.

"You must confess, however, Frank," said the latter, "that Von Malte is a good fellow?"

"Oh, for that—pretty well," was the gruff reply; "yet I don't wish the acquaintance continued. And in general you will do me a favor, Krone, not to smuggle any more barons or counts into my quarters."

"Perhaps, also, I shall do you a favor by staying away along with them?" asked Waldemar in a humorous tone.

"How can I help it, if you only keep company with people of rank? With such associations I have nothing in common."

"Will you tell me with what sort, then? It seems to me that you have no associates at all! You live here like a hermit in a cave, and allow the stream of life to roar by you, without inquiring whence it cometh or whither it goeth, and without concerning yourself what it bears upon its waves."

"It is strange—with a little alteration this reproof just suits the giver," returned the student. "You hardly put any of these solemn questions to yourself; but the difference is that while I sit on the dry land and contemplate the navigation, you sail quite carelessly down the stream."

"In that you are entirely mistaken, Frank! I have a fixed aim, and that I have it will be sufficiently evident hereafter."

"I can believe that! Your great aim is probably to make a distinguished and wealthy match, and become the slave of your own wife for the rest of your lifetime."

"May I ask," answered Waldemar, flushing, "whence you draw this delightful inference?"

"I had my grounds quite accidentally from one of those fine students who go out into the great world; who rise about noon, and notwithstanding affirm that they study. He narrated to some grateful listeners a variety of fashionable doings, and among the rest that you were paying court to the Countess Gyldenholdt. I may tell you, at the same time, that I have once or twice seen this fair lady in the street, and once when I chanced to be in the theater. She appeared to me haughtiness and deceit personified. I believe her character entirely corresponds with her aspect, and my first thought when I saw her was, that she must regard you as a sheer fool to think of such a conquest."

"It only grieves me, Frank," said Waldemar with dignity, "that you will always judge so bitterly and harshly—of course because of her rank. Fransiska Gyldenholdt is no common character, and the higher one's position the more is one exposed to envy and misrepresentation. I make no secret of it at all, that I love her; and can I help it that by chance she is high-born and rich?"

"A remarkable chance! More likely you lament it as an obstacle?"

"It does not lessen her in my eyes. I really do not consider a coronet and some thousands as Nuremberg ware, to turn up the nose at."

"No, that I can believe! And perhaps it is in connection with this that it appears you will not take the examination for the profession of jurist?"

"How do you know that I will not? But even if it

were so—may one not become a useful member of society without undergoing an examination? and may one not be happy although he marries into a rich circle? I have still faith in my lucky star, and won't allow myself to be terrified because people screech like owls in the night."

"By-the-way," resumed Waldemar, after a pause, "have you lately heard from Stromby?"

"No," was the curt answer, "I have not."

"Have you been there yourself?"

"Not since September."

"Then perhaps you do not know that Ida has gone to Jutland? I heard it lately from Bruun, and it vexed me, for I was just thinking of visiting the Stainforths, and would have proposed to you to come with me to Stromby."

"I shall not go soon again to Stromby," coldly returned Frank. "I have no time for jaunting."

"You have often been a riddle to me, Frank, but this evening I cannot in the least make you out."

"It is thus best for both of us!" bluntly replied the other, and hereupon they separated: Waldemar feeling it now his turn to be wounded and grieved by the ungraciousness of his *quondam* school-fellow. The old chamberlain had not been quite wrong in his opinion that one may cherish too romantic imaginations about youthful acquaintances and school-friendships.

The clock struck twelve as Waldemar went home, and the streets were very still. Nothing is more lonely than a large city in the night-time, when, with their speechless majesty, the star-bright heavens arch over that home of joy and sorrow, of mingled peace and war, levity and sin. He remained standing for a moment looking up at the stars, as if he would read into the future. The crisis of the future may, indeed, be distant, but it may also be close at hand.

Having entered Amalie Street, he was startled to perceive, as he approached the house, that there were lights in all the rooms of his uncle's story; next he observed

a carriage at the door, and immediately guessed that this must be the doctor's, and that the old man was ill. So it turned out; the chamberlain had for some time been ailing, but had unexpectedly this evening become much worse. A message had been sent for Waldemar to the places he was in the habit of visiting, but it did not occur to any one to seek him at Frank's. Hans had been very uneasy at the young gentleman's absence, as he feared, from the chamberlain's state, that he might die suddenly.

It was not yet so bad as that; on the contrary, he was better next day, then worse again, and so it went on for a fortnight, during which Chamberlain Krone was not able again to leave his bed. Inquiries about his health came in from every quarter, even from the very highest, and all this sympathy appeared to act soothingly on the patient's complaint. One day he was so well that he received some visits in bed, but this was the last flicker of life, and the last time the old state-official gave audience. On the evening of the same day he slept quietly away, just when his adopted son and his faithful servant thought that a refreshing slumber had overtaken him.

Although Waldemar must have expected that a serious illness, at his uncle's age, would end in death, still he was strongly shaken by it. He sat long by his uncle's death-bed, and gave way to tears, then went up to his own chamber and spent there a sleepless night. As Hans came into his room next morning, the old servant's slow step, sorrowful countenance, and increased respect in manner, reminded the young man of the great change that had taken place in his destiny. He stood now entirely alone in the world, and was seized with a feeling of loneliness and emptiness before quite unknown to him. Hans's presence was really somewhat cheering to him, and, with instinctive warmth, he pressed the old valet's hand, saying:

"Thanks for all your faithfulness to my dear uncle, good Hans. You were ever his best friend!"

These words Hans never forgot; they knitted him to his young master for life.

A bustle soon succeeded the mournful quiet, for the chamberlain had, during the first days of his illness, given both Waldemar and Hans minute instructions as to how his funeral was to be conducted. This last arrangement of the chamberlain's was no way subordinate in punctilio or exactitude to those he had been wont to make during his best days, and as he found ready appreciation on such a point from the sympathy of Hans, his wishes were most carefully observed. Nothing was wanting at the funeral of the chamberlain, except his own presence; and he was borne to the earth with a splendor which will long be remembered in that street.

After the funeral, Chamberlain Blom, the executor of Fritz Krone's last will and testament, and his friend from early life, dined with the young heir. In the afternoon the notary-public arrived, Hans was duly called in, and the will read in form. Despite all the pains the testator had bestowed on the style, and though an effective allusion to his forefathers must thus be lost to posterity, we must content ourselves with briefly recording the contents of the said deed, and describe the impression it made on the heirs.

Chamberlain Blom seated himself in the deceased's velvet arm-chair, and took a pinch of snuff with an air of superiority, for he of course knew the secrets which should shortly come to light. By his side sat the heir, apparently indifferent to the result; while Hans stood prepared at a respectful distance. The face of the old valet was worth studying, for in spite of his efforts to maintain a calm exterior, the greatest anxiety revealed itself in his look, and when he brought Chamberlain Blom a glass of water his hand shook. It was indeed a critical moment for him, a turning-point in his life. Now would be seen whether he had been the acute speculator he passed for; it would be decided whether the chamberlain's Hans could take his seat among servants and lackeys as a respected veteran, or should be laughed at

as a simpleton; finally must this also become clear, if for the future he was to be master in his own house, or if the sharp-tongued Jane should swing the slipper over his aged head. For when she would often fain have tempted him to take what she thought allowable profit to himself in the chamberlain's housekeeping, Hans had each time referred her to the legacy; and now, oh dreadful thought! what if the legacy should melt into thin air, and he be put off with a formal bequest of the wardrobe, or some other flattering codicil for a mourning-ring!

The solemn introduction to the testament, and the reference to the ancestors, made Hans look as if cold water were poured down his back; when the chamberlain in his own ceremonious style proceeded with the main theme, few could have followed its details with such evident comprehension as the faithful attendant. When Hans was at last relieved by the intelligence that he was the owner of eight thousand thalers, the warmth of his gratitude was so great, or the revulsion of feeling so strong, that instantly he burst into tears.

The principal heir remained calm to the end, yet it gave him a slight start to learn that his means in sure possession amounted to about 120,000 thalers. Chamberlain Blom smiled, and shook his young friend's hand in a very significant manner. Hans wished his new master joy, but seemed less surprised than he to learn the amount of the legacy.

Some few days after the funeral, Waldemar sat lingering over his breakfast alone, when Hans entered, and laid letters and newspapers on the late chamberlain's writing-desk, as had been his wont in time past. The old regulations were still followed in the house, and closely and obstinately maintained by Hans; while the young master endeavored to keep patient under this tyranny out of respect for his uncle's name, forming by degrees, however, the resolution to part gracefully with Hans, and elevate Niels to the post of valet. For several days Waldemar had taken the letters with a certain eagerness, which made Hans guess that he expected

some communication of importance, causing him thus to regard his master with a curiosity more and more troublesome. He now loitered some moments in the room, but got nothing by his pertinacity, for the young gentleman let the letters lie with stoical indifference until he was alone. Then, indeed, he sprang up and opened them in haste; his color rose while he read them, and as he laid them down again a gleam of triumph spread over his handsome features.

Thus ran the first of the letters, written in a large upright character, and on rather plain paper :

“NOBLY DESCENDED MR. V. KRONE:—

“With grief I have learnt the sad news of your uncle, the chamberlain’s, sudden death. He was a man of estimable character, and his loss is sincerely lamented by us all. I thank you for the intimation you sent me of it, and the condolence of my family, as well as my own, is offered you by

“ARTHUR COUNT OF GYLDENHOLDT.

“GYLDENHOLDT, 14th December, 184—.

“P.S.—I have charged my nephew to convey to you an invitation from us.”

The other letter, written fluently, and dated Dyrland, the 13th, was in the following terms :

“DEAR KRONE:—So the old man is gone already! Peace be with him; and my due consideration to you on the event. You were really attached to him, and I know his death would give you pain. But why should we lament over it? I therefore add my hearty congratulation on the independent and agreeable position in which his will has placed you. You have indeed cause to remember him with gratitude. Your late uncle was like himself to the last. In departing just at the right moment, and leaving his treasures to younger energies, he has proved ever *comme il faut*! But I see in

spirit how your face is taking solemn and disapproving folds. I will therefore only add—and what an absolute hoard have you come into possession of! A hundred and twenty thousand thalers! We were all—except the omniscient Sass—astonished at it. In my uncle's regard you have ascended several degrees: '120,000 thalers,' he repeated twice,—'well, I must say the good chamberlain has known what he was about; for he began, sure enough, with but 40,000.'

"You know of course that my uncle has much respect for capitalists, but lest you should be shocked, I must however add, that your good luck would not have interested him if you had not besides made such a good impression on him as you have done.

"What will you now take in hand? Throne it in solitary somber majesty in your uncle's velvet arm-chair, and receive visits of condolence? I have a better proposal to make to you, or, to speak more accurately, I have an invitation to you from my uncle to spend the Christmas with us. We shall have some splendid hunting, and as you have never tried life in the country before, I can guarantee your enjoyment of it.

"My uncle, who is not fond of using the pen, bade me invite you, but a certain young lady pressed him, in order not to offend against forms, at least to say in his letter that he had done so. I hope thus that a specimen of my old uncle's immense handwriting will effect what my repeated entreaties have never accomplished, namely, to move your high-mightiness to quit the classic stones of the capital, as the doctor would say, and to honor the barbarous heaths of Jutland with your majestic footprint. (*Apropos*—bring good water-tight boots with you!)

"My uncle merely inquired, 'Can he handle a gun?' and thought, I presume, that the mysteries of the chase are as unknown to you as—yes, as what? No simile will occur to me, so I must beg you to supply the omission; suffice it to say, as I have so often seen you put a

bullet in the center of the black spot, I answered that he might rest assured of it. Buckle on your knapsack, then, and come quickly.—Your attached,

“W. GYLDENHOLDT.”

Throughout the rest of the day Hans looked several times very inquiringly at his young master, as if convinced that something had taken place, or as if he perfectly well understood something, but Waldemar gave him no satisfaction on the point, appearing unmoved as before.

He dined that day with Chamberlain Blom, to whom he communicated his intention of spending Christmas at Gyldenholdt. This worthy old gentleman, whose habits were not of the active order, had observed with satisfaction the tact and propriety with which young Krone bore his new state of independence; and Waldemar soon perceived that if he merely attended to forms, his guardian would not trouble him much.

On returning home he summoned Hans, to whom he communicated his intention of taking young Niels into his service, though, in the first place, only on trial. His belief, indeed, was that Hans himself would not care to hold the employment much longer; at all events, the opportunity was a good one, he said, for training the lad, as he himself meant to leave home for a little, and would take Niels.

“I set off to-morrow at nine o’clock, Hans,” added he decidedly; “take Niels to help you; and have all my things packed at once.”

“It is a pity,” answered Hans, lingering, “that we did not know in the morning; we might have taken the day to it.”

“The night is long, Hans,” was the only answer.

“Gracious! Yes—yes, sir, all shall be rightly attended to, when we have the precise orders.”

These were circumstantially given, and the list of all that must be packed up and taken with them was very long. Hans increased it by some small suggestions,

and treated the whole affair of packing up with prolix importance. When all was done he came in and reported.

"That is well, Hans," was the reply. "You must be ready for bed now."

"I hope that we have not forgotten anything," persisted the odd old fellow, "for I presume master is going to some distance?"

Waldemar had resolved that Hans, as a punishment for his curiosity, should not learn till next morning where he was going to; but Hans had on his side determined that the young master should handsomely make a clean breast before retiring to bed. Chamberlain Krone had, especially during his latter years, been very open-mouthed to his old servant, and, when recently ailing, had honored him with small confidences, to a degree of which the nephew had not the slightest idea. Moreover, Hans was sufficiently versed in court matters to recognize the Gyldenholdt coat-of-arms at a glance, and he thus knew from whom his master had that morning got letters. For answer to Hans's last question, the young gentleman cast a peremptory glance on him, and said:

"We can talk about that in the morning, Hans."

"Yes, sir. You must really not be offended—but the truth is," argued he, as if broaching the most unanswerable of excuses, "I am too anxious to sleep without fairly knowing where your honor means to travel."

Waldemar opened his eyes, and was on the point of returning an angry answer, but he bethought him that next morning he should be quit, once for all, of the old torment, and as he was equally assured of Hans's faithfulness and his curiosity, he mastered himself and replied with a smile:

"You are very curious, Hans. I am going to Gyldenholdt. I have an invitation there," he condescended further to explain, "to a shooting-party."

"Yes, yes; I fancied as much," answered Hans with a nod of satisfaction. "True, sir,—and I wish all suc-

cess; your honor may rely upon it, I never betrayed a confidence. But—but I have a request to make, which I hope will be granted!”

“Well, what is that, Hans?” said Waldemar impatiently, while not a little annoyed at the evident knowledge of his purpose at Jutland.

“I would beg to be allowed, sir, to accompany you to Gyldenholdt, instead of Niels.”

“What good, in all the world, would that do?”

“It is certainly not for my own pleasure I would seek it; I may well desire a little quiet in my old days, but—but——”

“Now, Hans, out with your speech, since it must be so. Take a chair and sit down,” continued the young man with humor; “you are henceforth your own master, and you have had a tiresome business of it to-night.”

“Your honor!” exclaimed Hans, in a wounded tone, “now you have the advantage of me! Nothing shall induce me to sit down in your presence; I did not think you had such a low opinion of my sense of propriety.”

Hans recovered himself and continued, while drawing nearer:

“I must tell your honor that I once, many years ago, accompanied the late chamberlain on—on a journey of importance.”

“Ah, Hans! Indeed?” Waldemar could not help exclaiming.

“It was when he went to Faarnfeldt to court the Baroness Stjernholm. We had then some experiences which may perhaps be useful to your honor. The unhappy result of the journey must, in my opinion, be ascribed wholly and alone to the circumstance that the chamberlain offended the baron’s steward of the manor, Secretary Brodstrup. Does your honor smile at that?”

“Ha, ha! Yes, Hans, I do! It is too simple of you to believe that the baron allowed his steward of the manor to poke his nose into his family affairs.”

“Then I can assure you, master, that it is not so incredible. The cause stood on weak grounds, and the

secretary, who had much to say, gave a push to the falling chariot. The late chamberlain—he was then only groom of the bedchamber—had irritated the secretary by a haughty and contemptuous reply at table, in the presence of many persons, and he is said to have sworn that, as surely as his name was Brodstrup, Groom of the Bedchamber Krone should never be master at Faarnfeldt. How he managed the baron I know not, but the secretary looked at us with a triumphant evil glance as we departed—and so we comprehended the whole affair.”

“This is ~~an~~ interesting story, Hans, and it is, moreover, quite new; but what has it to do with my Christmas visit to Gyldenholdt?”

“Yes, certainly, your honor, I shall explain that to you. It is exactly the same thing at Gyldenholdt. Councillor Sass is the count’s right hand; he is almost omnipotent with the count; he has served the count for forty years, and is intrusted with all the secrets of the family——”

“But not with the countess’s—ha, ha!” laughed Waldemar, hurried away by the ludicrous in the whole scene; but immediately after he colored all over at having said these words, and was provoked at having allowed himself to enter into conversation with Hans.

“I would only wish to accompany master because this Councillor Sass knows me well; he is a sensible man, who does not despise a judicious word, even when it comes from the lips of a servant; in fact, I had once an opportunity of doing him a little good turn, it was when he wished to invest his money in——”

“Come, now, Hans, no more anecdotes to-night,” concluded Waldemar.

“I only thought,” persevered Hans, “I perhaps might speak a good word for your honor to the coun——”

“Hark ye, this is going too far in your conceit,” broke out his master, springing up. “Not a word more, but go to bed.”

“I solemnly promised the late honored chamberlain,”

still murmured Hans at the door, "to be of use to you where I could,—but meanwhile your honor has got angry, so I must submit. As I see well enough," ended he, "that you will not take me with you on your journey, and Niels, the puppy, is to go, it is my advice,—and believe me, master, the advice is good,—that your honor, at coming to Gyldenholdt, should take pains to stand on a good footing with Councillor Sass."

With that, Hans bowed and went his way, while the young master first threw himself in vexation into the arm-chair, but shortly afterward laughed at the whole affair.

"Things will prosper finely," remarked old Hans below stairs, "when two such blades go out into the world together as the master and Niels; the porridge they make will sure enough be singed! However, come what will, there is more mettle in the young man than there was in the old. The chamberlain certainly never behaved so to me. Niels will have no light service. I will whisper something in his ear in the morning."

Next morning early, Hans and Niels sat together in the low room over a cup of coffee. Hans poured forth his speech in quite another style from that he employed in the upper apartments. He had, during his long service, learnt to use rather polished language, but in his own private territory, especially when somewhat irritated, it was in quite another tone.

"No foolish pranks, Niels," began he, "when you get to Gyldenholdt, do you hear? You perhaps fancy that the count's servants will fall staring at sight of such a dandy, now that you have got so far as to put on the white frock. As for that, though, you are still raw enough to flame up to the eyes when you carry a salver among company—your ears get as red as a pitcher's, if you have to go into a room full of guests, and you can't pass a mirror without staring to see yourself, as if doubtful whether your coat ben't wrong side out. Then, as to listening and eavesdropping, you go to work like an oaf with it. Give me my pipe, the long one there, and sit

down opposite me. So now I have you *ang-fass*, as his late excellency used to say, and thus I can see on your whey-face if you're attending to me."

Hans lighted his pipe and continued:

"You must wear your livery as if you had been born in it; see and go about your work in style, always busy and full of it, ready to catch your master if you're taken on a sudden. Mark me, now, Niels, no trifling here, you have his confidence to gain. Accordingly you must not flirt with the girls, nor, above all, gossip to strange servants about your own knowledge of affairs in hand. Keep a close tongue when from home, that is a great matter, Niels, a principal matter, I assure you," and here Hans raised his finger. "Whatever you may think, no replies to himself, no argumentation, no air of grumbling, always deferential and well satisfied. I'm particular on this, Niels, because I could take my oath on it that ere you served a fortnight—without this warning, of course—you'd have been eight and twenty times out of your mind with rage at him."

"It must be a dog's life, then, father," answered Niels, paring his nails as he had seen his master do. "Is one never to open one's lips, then, either way?"

"Not at first, Niels, certainly not; not until you sit fast in the saddle; there must be reasonableness in all things, and one must sow before he can reap. You must begin by being honest to a very farthing—ay, a farthing in especial, more than a thaler itself, look ye—and not take the advantage you see the other scoundrels do, snatching at it like fools! Honesty is number one, to obey is number two, to keep a close tongue number three. Can you hold all that in your thick skull?"

Yes, Niels thought he could; there was no such difficulty about it, surely.

"Then you must know," continued Hans, after he had opened the door and convinced himself that mother Jane was not listening, "I would not have placed you with the young master if I had not thought that you might make your fortune in this way. He is a good

master, but he is more than that—he is a rising man! Wait till he gets to the top of the tree! I will tell you something, if you can keep it to yourself, but you must not blab—to no one whatever, observe, least of all to mother; for as concerns gossip, she is as leaky as a cracked tea-pot.” Hans laid his hand on Niels’s arm and said in his ear, “The master stands in a fair way, lad, to wed the young Countess of Gyldenholdt!”

“But, father, that is no secret at all,” said Niels, much disappointed. “Why, we talked about ~~nothing~~ else the other night at Count Ferdinand’s. The two are betrothed, in fact.”

“Phew! Mere talk in the dark; sheer gossip,” was the disdainful reply. “If there’s aught I despise, boy, it is gossip, ignorant gossip.”

“Is he, then, betrothed or not?” asked Niels, pricking his ears again like a lynx.

“Something half way, neither one nor t’other,” went on the old man oracularly. “You see he is engaged to the countess herself, but the count has not set his seal to it. No secret, quotha? All you have heard, sirrah, is prate—sheer prate; but when I tell you what I do, you may be morally certain that it is a secret, and sure to boot. Has your precious block of a head made one sensible reflection, now, on the matter? When you heard that the master was to have a countess, you doubtless ran at it like a bull-calf when it sees a red clout; but mark me, Niels, mark me, there are scores of different sorts among countesses. There are some countesses I would not give sixpence for, both as regards their persons and their possessions, while there are others to be rated higher; but, dash it! there is not a countess in the land that stands so high as the one in question! She is beautiful as the day, and rich as the royal treasury; why, one way and t’other, she is worth about a million.”

“The devil she is!” exclaimed Niels, slapping his knees.

“Don’t bawl so, blockhead! If, now, the master gets

round her—and I think he may, for there is mettle in the young rogue——”

“Eh, father?” broke in Niels, half aghast, half cautious. “Hist! you call the master a—a rogue! Don’t be afraid to trust me, though.”

“Pooh—you don’t understand; ’twas but our court way of talking,” explained the father. “I mean there is more than meets the eye in our young gentleman. ’Gad, boy, there is something about him that begins to strike me like the ticket by which Count Rosendel’s coachman won the great prize in the lottery, and that was thunder and lightning out of a couple of small numbers! Fifty thousand was the result, Niels; but I’d be inclined to lay much more on the two eyes of Herr Waldemar, when his spirit comes out as it did last night. Now that he has the substance at his back, I don’t see what should be in the way; but still he must be cautious.

“Do you see now, Niels,” said his experienced father, lighting his pipe once more, “if he marries her, by my soul we come into a good family. She has plenty of money herself, and her cousin, Count Wilhelm,—who is, besides, the master’s best friend,—inherits the barony. These are brilliant prospects; but now we come to the kernel of the thing; in the same way as I have lived in the aristocratic world, and at court, so you will come to live among the nobility in the country. I have speculated in bonds and in legacies, but you shall speculate in landed property!” Hans laid himself back in the sofa with dignity, and Niels, who had inherited something of the father’s talent, wore an intelligent air.

“There are many delightful farms on the estate, Niels, and if you can, on leaving service, get hold of one of them, you will become quite a landed gentleman yourself; and you may succeed in it, if you will but use your natural understanding. You must see and get into favor with the count, and with all of them together. You must be nimble as a squirrel in the countess’s service, that is at this moment the main thing; with the old count, on the other hand, you need not be so particular, for he will notice you

no more than the fly that sits on the wall. The young count you must lay yourself out more to please; but, more especially still, you must have an eye to the steward of the manor, Councillor Sass. He is the man before the whole of them; do you understand? He gives away more places than the count himself, and he sits so securely, that whether we have the old count or the young one, Sass will still be at the helm, if he be still above ground. When the count is not by—mark that—when the count is not by, you must take off your hat with as deep a reverence to Sass as to the count himself. In the next place, you must never take a penny of drink-money from him, if you give him a helping hand on any occasion. Sass is fond of his money, and besides, it makes a confounded good impression to refuse drink-money; such mean greed, not to be able to move a fintger without being paid for it, is not becoming a decent servant, and believe me, Niels, t'other line of conduct pays!

“I will tell you one thing more. I was once, several years ago, at Gyldenholdt with my late master for a day or two, and I suppose everything there still goes on in the same way. It is not such a very grand house,” remarked Hans, with an air of importance; “no doubt there is abundance of plate, and that some of the heaviest I have ever had in my hand; but the old count does not care about the fashion, and they don’t understand ~~there~~ how to set out a table. In certain respects things are managed very economically, and it may easily happen that you see a mended dish in the kitchen. But beware of expressing surprise at it; no boastings about what you have seen in town, or such like. Remember that if your master does not get the countess, you may whistle for the farm; and it cannot but prosper your master’s affairs that you conduct yourself with discretion. Especially you must seem as if you had never heard anything about your master paying court to the countess, and never let him guess that you know anything about the matter. Remember, Niels, that the birds that sing too

early are those taken by the cats! So write to me every fortnight, and let me know how matters stand. There, bundle off, the master rings!"

Precisely at the appointed hour for the post-chaise it stood at the door, and shortly thereafter it rolled off across St. Anna's Place, followed by the best wishes of Hans and Jane. The young master inside the carriage meditated on the future, and sank into gilded dreams. These were indeed of a pleasant nature, but nevertheless fluttered by some agitation, and his brow did not exactly bear the stamp of the fresh joyousness of youth. The young servant outside on the box, with his blooming countenance and trim new suit, hoisted bright colors on the bark which bore Waldemar Krone and his fortunes out into the world. But even he felt himself somewhat encumbered by Father Hans's wisdom, and reviewed in thought the secret instructions of the morning.

The journey passed for Waldemar Krone like a dream, in which one form stood forth, sometimes clearer, sometimes more dimly, but always in substance the same; and its essence was expressed in the one word—FRANSISKA!

CHAPTER VII.

PHILENES AND CHLORIS.

It may be supposed that Waldemar Krone did not linger on the way, and the postillions got such lavish drink-money, that Niels for the first time ventured a suggestion, and for the first time also got a rebuff for his pains. Away they went, and on the evening of the third day found themselves at Koldby, the post-town nearest Gyldenholdt. Accidentally learning that the

letter-carrier from Gyldenholdt, who also on the way called at Dyrland, was just then sitting in the inn tap-room, ready for departure, Waldemar resolved to communicate his arrival both to Count Wilhelm and the Lehnsgrave, expecting that at all events he had thus insured the sending of a vehicle to meet him next day.

Not merely the morning, however, but the whole forenoon passed without the appearance of any equipage, and as the detention in a third-rate inn was not exactly fitted to put him in good humor, about half-past twelve he was just on the point of raising his voice to summon Niels, and in a tone of irritation order a post-chaise to be got ready, when there was a tap at the door, and a little squat man entered and made a profound reverence.

He was dressed in a long brown coat, and had, in the old-fashioned style, a large bunch of seals dangling at his waistcoat pocket. His face was broad, his nose short and thick, his mouth small and projecting, his hair, which had begun to turn gray, was thick and curly, while the keenness of his eyes was not diminished by time, nor even by the fact that they squinted in a very marked degree.

"Have I the honor of speaking to Mr. von Krone?" asked the stranger, passing his left hand in a peculiar manner across his mouth, and giving a little twirl to the old gray riding-cap which he held in the right. "I am Attorney Sass, Count Gyldenholdt's steward."

"Ah, indeed," answered Waldemar, while he very courteously offered him his hand; "I am particularly glad to make your acquaintance."

"I knew your uncle, the late chamberlain, in his time," continued Sass, with a jovial smile, while he kept Waldemar Krone's hand longer in his than is generally thought necessary. "He was a man for whom I entertained great respect. We once did some business together, and I venture to say to our mutual satisfaction. I recognized your honor at once by the striking family-likeness," concluded Mr. Sass, with an expressive nod,

while he dropped Waldemar's hand, pulled down his waistcoat, and began to play with the seals.

"By report I know you well, councillor," replied Waldemar, coloring, while Hans's good counsel ran in his mind. "May I beg you to take a seat?"

"Tell me," inquired Sass, "is your uncle's servant, Hans Jespersen, still alive?"

"Yes," answered Waldemar, clearing his throat; "he is porter in the house at Amalie Street, and is staying there for the present."

"Well, I am glad to hear that; the same Hans is a respectable fellow and a long-headed. D'ye know, Mr. von Krone, something might have been made of that man if he had had education."

"No doubt of it! '*Les beaux esprits se rencontrent*,'" thought Waldemar to himself. "May I ask, councillor, if you come from Gyldenholdt? I wrote yesterday evening to the count, and communicated to him my intention of going there to-day."

"Hm!" answered Sass, rubbing his mouth; "the count has certainly received your letter, and I have come here to bid you welcome."

"Oh! Many thanks, sir," answered Waldemar with embarrassment, while again he bowed slightly.

"Perhaps," continued Sass, after a moment's reflection—"perhaps—might I offer you a seat in my conveyance?"

Mr. Krone's surprise was too evident to allow Sass to pass it unnoticed; but this was not the first time that Sass had observed the odd effect of what he called his patron's "system of non-conveyance;" he therefore went on without the least embarrassment, almost in a merry tone:

"Now, Mr. von Krone, to be frank with you, sir, no doubt you have sat here waiting till the count should send a carriage for you, but you might wait long for that. You must know that it is against the count's principles to fetch his guests to Gyldenholdt; he does it very rarely, as he thinks that the charge is thus dis-

proportionate on his side, while it is but trifling to each individual. The hospitalities begin nearer home in all cases, and there is thus no special incivility toward you."

"Oh—the matter is not worth speaking so much about, councillor. On the other hand——"

"Well, that is sensibly spoken. It is only a caprice with his lordship, which you will soon forget once you are at Gyldenholdt."

"On the other hand," continued Waldemar, "I am unquestionably surprised that I have not heard from Count Wilhelm; I wrote to him at the same time."

"So—so! Well, Count Wilhelm has a good excuse; he went yesterday morning to the market in Aarhus, and as he takes a little excursion northward at the same time, can scarcely be home before to-morrow evening."

"That explains it," answered Waldemar gayly. "May I then not offer you, councillor, a seat in *my* vehicle? I myself, my servant, and my luggage would certainly be too much for your horses. I start precisely at a quarter past one by post-chaise."

"I am quite at your service," replied Sass, a little disconcerted, as he took leave.

Sass had indeed been rather puzzled what to make of young Mr. Krone. The report of his courtship of the countess had reached Gyldenholdt, and Sass had asked himself if this invitation had any connection with it. He could very well appreciate Waldemar Krone's position in society, and he estimated his outward condition neither higher nor lower than was due to it. That in this respect Waldemar would not satisfy the count as his son-in-law, could be easily predicted. But what of the countess? From a lady who had disdained to become Lehnsgrevine at Revenborg, in Sass's opinion, anything might be expected; but she had in this respect so often befooled their expectations, that, until the preceding evening, he had given no weight to the rumor of her inclination for young Krone.

On that last evening the countess had said, in an opportune moment, when *tête-à-tête* with Sass:

"Don't you come by Koldby to-morrow morning, good Sass? If you are passing, don't forget to call on Mr. von Krone; he has never been here before, and no doubt will be astonished—if—if Count Wilhelm does not come to meet him."

Surprise was usually denoted in Sass's face by a sudden vacancy of expression, and he thus met the somewhat evident anxiety of the lady in regard to their visitor's reception.

"True, true, your ladyship," said he, recovering himself; "that reminds me there is a little errand or so at Koldby, and I shall make a point of going—when I will not forget to meet Mr. von Krone."

"Can it be possible?" asked Sass of himself, as that evening he descended the great stone staircase at Gyl-denholdt. "Hm! I am curious to see the youth."

Sass had now seen him, and going down the street at Koldby his thoughts ran thus:

"Faith, he is handsome enough, and may well take her fancy. He has a good deal of the fine cavalier style about him—now, why not? Upon my word, I should be delighted if we could get the countess well married; 'twould be a sin to have her becoming an old maid at last! His money well invested in a landed estate, and also a title along with it—that is not so impossible! By Count Wilhelm's statement, Krone wished to become purchaser of Tiornholm. Let us first see them together: I know her ladyship's ways, and can soon tell if there be more under it than the usual gossip about matches. The countess has never before received a visitor in this manner—never; if it be so, and I really see that she wishes to have him, I shall do for the young gentleman what only Sass—ay, on my honor, only Sass—can do. Ha, ha! It is not just every one's case in a twinkling to multiply a fortune like his by two!"

From reflections like these, it was clear that Walde-mar Krone had made a favorable impression on the

count's "right hand," and the future proved that it was worth while to stand on a good footing with Sass, if not exactly on the grounds which old Hans had assigned.

At the hour agreed on, Waldemar drove off with Sass at his side and Niels on the box, down the road to Gyl-denholdt; while the procurator's conveyance modestly rumbled behind with the luggage.

Sass might well have afforded, like many others with the title of councillor, a handsome vehicle; but partly from old frugal custom, partly from motives of policy, he always assumed scrupulous plainness in his style of life. This modesty pleased his lord well, and made him complaisant toward him in many important points. The count could forgive his subordinates much, but not that they should exalt themselves above their class. Sass had been quick to perceive this, and always kept himself prudently without the line of demarkation.

The councillor was very talkative on the road out, and the churches, schools, and mansions which they passed gave him abundant opportunities to expatiate on all the improvements on the estate during the count's time; indeed, as this period was about coeval with Sass's own, he could thus specially laud his own activity. Waldemar was a very attentive listener, and made use of the opportunity to acquire some knowledge of the relations in which the Gyldenholdts stood to the community.

At last they drove past the brushwood where the foxes had their haunts, and on the chaise turning abruptly to the right—for the roads in Jutland are partial to turnings—they could contemplate with ease through the carriage-window the expansive and beautiful landscape which lay spread out at their feet.

Down in the valley, by a small lake smooth as glass, Gyldenholdt Castle raised its three spires in the clear evening air, on a level with four immense pine-trees which stood in a group a little to the west of the castle, and mirrored themselves in the water. The castle itself, for so it was named from olden times, was a reddish,

weather-beaten, massive building, with two small side-wings, which had each a turret on the inner side of the mansion; while the great turret rose on the outside, in the center of the principal façade. The style of the building was otherwise, as Sass said, very bad; the windows were four-cornered and without borders, and all the ornament consisted in the indented gables, but still the castle looked venerable, and answered to its name. A thin layer of snow, fallen in the night, covered roofs and gables, and set off the brown tint of the walls. The spacious granaries, dairies, the gardener's house and greenhouse, the mill, the doctor's house, and Sass's own dwelling, gave the whole the appearance of a village shut in by woods which stretched away toward the north and west for miles over a hilly country.

"Glorious!" exclaimed Waldemar Krone; "it really far surpasses my expectation, though I have heard much of the fine situation of Gyldenholdt."

"Yes, is it not?" answered Sass in triumph; "upon my soul, Gyldenholdt is worth seeing!"

Shortly afterward the chaise rolled into the avenue alongside the lake, passed the steward's dwelling, the doctor's residence, and the ample farmstead, made a curve round the tall pine-trees, and thus rolled, at the stroke of four, over a bridge into the court.

A servant was quickly at hand, so that Niels descended too late to open the carriage-door, and shortly after the count himself came out on the stair.

"Welcome, Mr. Krone," said he graciously, "I am glad to see you here; you are very punctual. Come in, Sass; no doubt there is a cover for you."

Waldemar soon found himself in the drawing-room, walking up and down the floor by his host's side; while Sass amused himself by playing with the countess's parrot. The count spoke as calmly and unmovedly to his young guest as if it were the most natural thing in the world that Waldemar Krone should find himself at Gyldenholdt, although he had traveled fifty Danish

miles to reach it, and his heart beat with emotion behind his silk waistcoat at the thought that he was now really there.

His eyes watched the door into the anteroom, but in vain; no ladies appeared, and he thus got time to survey his surroundings more narrowly.

The chamber was not furnished in the modern fashion, but yet arranged with a certain old-fashioned solid elegance, which is never to be found in houses nowadays; the same was the case with the adjoining little boudoir, the doors of which stood open. The dimensions of the drawing-room, both in height and width, far surpassed what is usual; the thick walls formed spacious window-recesses, with pleasant side-seats, from which the view of the large park and the noble groups of trees was most inviting; the whole was thus as lordly and imposingly beautiful as he imagined.

"I am glad to hear you are a sportsman," said the count.

"It should rather be said that I should like to become one, count," answered Waldemar; "I can certainly handle a gun, but for the rest I am entirely uninitiated into the mysteries of the chase."

"If Mr. von Krone does not know the terms of sport," said Sass, laughing, "there will be heavy fines on the 30th. That is something for Klos."

"Klos is my marksman," remarked the count in explanation. "Well, in time you will get to understand such matters well enough. But here we have my daughter."

More charming than ever, the countess entered; she was always in a great degree mistress of her emotions, and few could throw so much grace and expression into a salutation as she; but now a passing flutter of bashfulness crossed her high-bred countenance as she approached Waldemar, whose face lighted up as by a sunbeam when she appeared. To an observer so attentive as old Sass, the meeting partook of a character which he knew was distasteful to her ladyship, namely, the dramatic in or-

dinary life; and she could clearly read on the bailiff's visage that he had appreciated the fact.

The count asked Mr. Krone to take the countess in to dinner, he himself took the lady-companion, Miss Marten, and Sass trotted behind alone, as he had done many a time before. The conversation at table was very lively between the countess and Waldemar; the others now and then took part, but the count only made short dry observations of assent or civility, as he preferred eating his dinner in quiet.

After dinner the gentlemen went up to the billiard-room, which, as well as the library adjoining, was lighted up and made comfortable with fires suited to the season. The count presently led Waldemar into the library, with the remark :

"Here you see what, in my daughter's opinion, is the best thing in all Gyldenholdt."

Waldemar was indeed much surprised at the elegance with which the apartment was arranged; for in this country a library is the last place wherein one expects to find luxury. The books were placed in ponderous mahogany cases with glass doors, tastefully alternating on either side with cabinets for the display of well-arranged foreign curiosities, objects of interest in nature, or ornaments in the rococo style; while at intermediate spaces were pedestals on which rested some valuable pieces of sculpture, and sundry quaint figures carved in wood or ebony. On the walls above hung numerous pictures; over the bookcases stood busts of distinguished men, which came out well from the dark-red of the background. On the farthest wall, between the bookcases, hung a large portrait, the size of life, of an old gentleman in peruke and coat of mail; and on the opposite wall, between the windows, a bracket sustained one conspicuous bust in white marble of Louis XIV., evidently of exquisite workmanship.

"I must own," said the count, after Waldemar had for a moment contemplated in silent admiration all this splendor, "that I have very little merit in the whole

concern, except in so far as at Fransiska's instance I have been led to fit up the room and restore the paintings. The great portrait there in the background represents the founder of the barony, my great-grandfather, whose name, like my own, was Arthur. He had therefore the presumption to call himself Gyldenholdt the First—hm! it stands engraved in the stone above the chimney, as you see. He was, however, a very peaceful gentleman, although, according to the fashion of those days, he is represented in armor. He lived in the beginning of the last century, traveled much, and spent large sums on books, pictures, and other gewgaws. The greatest part of the eight thousand volumes here, the most of the engravings contained in the presses underneath, together with the paintings—of which many hang in other rooms, and which I shall show you to-morrow—were collected by him. The whole, along with his travels, and long-continued residence in foreign lands, cost, to my knowledge, a pretty sum,—for he left the barony much encumbered. And this, sometimes diminished, sometimes rather increased, passed as an heirloom from son to son, until at last, happily, I have got the better of it."

"There are, I believe," continued the count, "some very rare books among the collection, but in my day I have had other things to attend to than to pore over these old folios—hey, Sass?"

Sass nodded his head significantly.

"Of the forty-eight years during which I have possessed the barony—for I was only two and twenty when I succeeded to it—I spent five and twenty in paying off the debt, and during the remaining twenty-three years I have not had time to study much; but I think that my daughter and my brother's son, when I am once dead and gone, will forgive me for my want of learning—hm! But we are entirely forgetting our game; begin you, Sass!"

Waldemar had listened with great interest to the count's statement, and not in a less degree because the

old gentleman rarely gave utterance to his sentiments; but this was indeed his favorite theme; he had, like everybody else, his hobby, and rode it a little when opportunity occurred. As to Sass, he could never be tired of listening to these allusions to the conjoined activity of the count and himself during so many years; but they now set themselves to the billiard-table adjoining, and began to handle the cues in earnest.

Waldemar betrayed, at the very beginning of the contest, his great incapacity in the game; he therefore drew back, and the count did not detain him. The noble master of the house then delivered a stroke at the balls; next, Sass stooped, until his head was almost lost between his shoulders, stuck out his elbows, and made a master-hit, saying:

"Aha, Mr. Krone, now it becomes serious, does it not?"

Young Krone looked on at the game for a little, and then went into the library, where, to his agreeable surprise, he found the countess. She sat with her hand beneath her cheek, turning over the leaves of a book, lighted by the mild ray of the large astral lamp, which hung from the roof over the great round table, where newspapers and literary novelties were laid. She raised her beaming eyes, and bade him, with a smile, be seated.

"Have you got enough of billiards already?" asked she. "And what do you think of our library?"

"Of course I am charmed with it; it could not be otherwise, considering whose taste it manifests," was the fervent answer. "I shall spend a great part of the day here while at Gyldenholdt."

"That you will assuredly not get leave to do," answered the countess, laughing. "My father, and Wilhelm, when he comes, will give you something else to do. Does not the irrigation of meadow-land interest you, Mr. Krone?"

"Not in the very smallest degree!"

"Then I shall try by a short drive in the forenoon to

save you from a long march out to a meadow, which papa has laid under that process; he drags everybody out to see it!"

"A thousand thanks! To you I already owe the resource of books when necessary," added he. "I had no idea you could have so admirably provided for the use of such a collection!"

"Oh, true, I urged the plan," she said, with evident satisfaction at the compliment, "and I got my father to open his purse-strings—no easy matter, I can assure you. But it was specially Dr. Goldschmidt who arranged the whole; he has a rare talent for such things."

"Indeed! These bookcases are, as I may say, constructed in a handsome, half-modern, *renaissance* style, which suits so much the better, since Louis XIV., as I see, is installed as the genius of the place. That is a noble bust," continued Waldemar, turning round and contemplating it: "fine royal features, full of the proper self-confidence and importance; I had never before any just impression of Louis Fourteenth's exterior."

"Louis XIV. is my hero—my ideal of a king," exclaimed the countess. "I have been enthusiastic about him since my childhood; my first picture-book, as far back as I can remember, an old folio from the library here, treated of his own and his field-m Marshals' exploits, and this bust stood at that time in a corner out on the passage. I have often, as a little girl—now you must not laugh at me—curtsied to it when no one saw me, and played at being at the Court of Versailles."

"Then I dare not say anything against the great Louis; at school I was taught otherwise; and no great store was set by his greatness."

"Name me a prince who can be compared to him!"

"That I can easily do; and in order to beat you entirely from the field, I will just ask you to consider how small he becomes when compared with Napoleon."

"Heavens! no. Napoleon, that janissary! He was nothing but a brusque campaigner; he quite falls into the shade by the side of the gallant Louis, who in truth

was the first nobleman in his dominions. Can Napoleon's barrack-court be compared with the intellectual circle which the great Louis gathered about him? His age was the age of genius—Corneille, Racine, Molière—now I need not rhyme all these names over to you, who know them better than I."

"Yes, it is a brilliant period, but it cast a fearful shadow before it."

"Napoleon, at all events, left his country prostrate."

"Yes, countess; he went mad from the moment he wished to imitate Louis XIV."

"Which was entirely a failure on his part! but your opposition astonishes me; I expected that the times of Louis XIV. would just suit your taste. Have you any special conception of what King Louis's court was?"

"O yes; I am tolerably well versed in the old memoirs."

"It can't be helped; I must have you otherwise minded, and I don't despair of getting you over to my side. I could almost wish to give you a short lecture. Do you think you could have patience to listen to me for half an hour?"

"For a whole one; nay, for two, if you wish."

"Fine words; nothing more! The gentlemen of our day don't like to be instructed by ladies. The court of Louis XIV. became so intellectual, refined, and brilliant, because women ruled it. But don't think that this is self-praise; I belong to a degenerate age, and—I am no French lady."

"No; happily you are not; you have not that southern spasmodic unwomanly mode of acting, to which we northern folks can never get reconciled."

"One may perceive, Mr. Krone, that you have never been in Paris. The fashionable Parisian lady's manner is characterized by a graceful repose; she speaks very softly, and she is fond of easy *négligé* postures, but never drops into awkward ones like English women. She speaks softly—and what a language! French is pure music in the mouth of a native. But observe that even

the language attained its perfection under Louis XIV. It is a marvel that we may take up a book which is more than a hundred and fifty years old, and yet find that the language is almost exactly the same as in our own days. It was such a book I wished to show you," continued the countess, taking a folio from one of the bookshelves, "and," she concluded archly, "it was this which I meant to take as the foundation of my lecture."

"Well," said the count, who at that moment came in from the billiard-room, "are you already into the history of Louis XIV.? So you are liberated, Krone! I heard quite distinctly, Fransiska, when you predicted to Mr. Krone that to-morrow morning I would drag him out to the bramble meadow; hm! I have long ears."

"Did I guess far wrong, papa?" asked the countess, laughing.

"Well, to-morrow Krone shall escape; he shall be allowed to drive with you, and when the ponies set off, perhaps he may wish that he were walking quietly with me in the bramble meadow."

"Of late I drive very cautiously," answered the young lady.

"All the better, then," said her father. "And since you are so pleasantly occupied with historic studies, Krone, you will excuse my leaving you, as I have to transact some business with my bailiff."

With this the count went out, and Sass, with a shrewd smile, bowed and followed him.

"What do you think of Sass?" asked the countess of Waldemar.

"Ah—well—I have only been acquainted with him for half a day."

"You are, doubtless, afraid of his squint?"

"His external appearance is undeniably not prepossessing."

"But he is a faithful soul notwithstanding; he is heartily attached both to my father and the rest of us, and from his manner, I can see at once that you have

taken his fancy. Sass's sympathy or antipathy is quite intuitive, and he is obstinate in it as in all else. From the very first day that Dr. Goldschmidt came here, he turned a sour face to him, and the two will never become good friends."

"Such is often the case where both men have a strongly marked character," said Waldemar philosophically. "It however surprises me, for Mr. Sass seems to me above everything to be a cautious fellow."

"So he is, and accordingly it would be difficult to find a cleverer attorney; but he is still more energetic than cautious. I must own I like such forcible characters. What he wishes, he wishes to some purpose; when he hates, he hates in earnest, but to those for whom his heart beats warmly he is faithful to the last; and, at the same time, he is a very affectionate father to his family. In short, he is one of those people whom it is good to have for a friend, but all the worse as a foe."

"I trust, then, countess," rejoined the young man with emphasis, "that he is really *your* friend?"

"Of that I feel sure," she said, smiling. "First, because I am my father's daughter, and often when a child have sat on Sass's knee; in the next place, because when I grew older, I understood how to manage him. He is of that kind of people from whom you may ask any service, if only you show them full confidence; he is even pleased at being made serviceable."

"That shows how one may be mistaken; from seeing Sass, I should never have imagined that of him."

"'Tis amusing enough," continued the countess, "to observe Sass when his will must bow before my father's, for that is a sad scrape, and my father is sometimes inexorable. Once, but only once, it had nearly come to a breach between them, about a farm which was vacant, and which Sass wished to lease. But it is against my father's principles of management for his steward to be a tenant on the property. He did not get it, though after all his son-in-law was allowed to have the lease."

"I could wager, now," said Waldemar, "that he is not liked on the property—attached old managers seldom are so."

"There you guessed right! Things go better now in that respect; but formerly Sass was harsh toward the tenants—which my father, by-the-way, has never been. My father is short in his manner toward them, but he is obliged to be so, for you can have no idea to what a degree he is importuned with petitions about this thing and the next; but in action he is always kind. The wrath of the tenants thus boils over on poor Sass at every opportunity. Once a shot was fired at him from the woods, as he drove home of an evening from Koldby, and another time they broke his windows."

"And did that intimidate him?"

"Not at all! He maintained that they had only fired with gunpowder to frighten him. So every night he slipped all his dogs loose, and went about himself patrolling with his gun; he even gave a fellow who was lurking about the premises a charge of small shot in the legs."

"Could such a state of things really exist, and yet pass off so?"

"Oh, of course, that was nothing hereabouts. Only fifteen or sixteen years since, perhaps even later, we lived here in Jutland very much like savages. Do you not know the old proverb, that in Jutland it is high to heaven and far to Copenhagen? People took the law into their own hands, and the authorities paid no heed to it. Thus we had a well-organized band of thieves, who went about the country stealing. Why, Jutland was a perfect Siberia in its way—if not so still! But let us forget, for the moment at least, the spot where we chance to be. I have Aladdin's ring in my hand, and can conjure forth a genie, who in a second will bring us to the banks of the Seine, where you may dream yourself two centuries back in time."

The countess had all this time held the folio in her hand. She now opened it and showed Waldemar the title page, which was ornamented with the lilies of

France, surrounded by the wreath of the Order of the Holy Ghost; denoting that the book was printed in Paris in the year 1679, at the royal printing press. It was a description of the magnificent fêtes given at Versailles by Louis XIV. in the days of his splendor, and was illustrated by many engravings, having been issued by the king's own command. The book, truly a rare one, had been procured by the already-mentioned Count Arthur, during his residence in Paris in the last year of the great Louis's reign. The countess seemed to be quite at home in the text, for while turning over the leaves of the volume, and showing her attentive listener the characteristic old copperplates, she gave a lively and very minute account of the fête which Louis XIV. had held in the gardens at Versailles after the conclusion of the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. It became quite a little lecture, during which Waldemar sometimes, from the interest of the subject, forgot the narrator; sometimes again, before the countess's animated look, with the heightened brilliancy of her color, and the beautiful snow-white arm and hand with which she pointed out the pictures, forgot both King Louis and his court. Her admiration and attachment to all that was French was evident to him; but she had traveled much in France, and this circumstance made her description more lively.

"A fête like this," she said, "must really have been matchless, both from its variety, its exquisite taste, and the immense sums lavished on it. What we in our days call a fête seems to me by comparison really like a wretched caricature; but observe that the great king also treats a fête with the same earnestness and attention as a state affair or a battle. He himself retains the chief direction, and traces out the leading features of the programme; under him three great men from among the court officials, the Duke of Crequi, Marshal Bellefonde, and M. de Colbert, superintendent of the royal buildings, made all the arrangements; under these again, both men of genius and a crowd of artifi-

cers carried the plans into execution. See what can be accomplished by might! Do you know what occurs to me? Your late uncle, with his unusual talent for arranging, would have been the right man in the right place there! Had he lived in those days, and in Paris, he would assuredly have come to play a part in the Court of Versailles! He would certainly have been in the train that accompanied the great king when he went round the park, inspected the localities, and observed as to the water—already available at hand—how it could be adapted to heighten the splendor of the entertainment. Turn round again, Krone; view the bust there on the pedestal, and let the proud face bring back the costume as the pictures represent it—the brocaded coat, knee-breeches, silk stockings, and high-heeled shoes, the flat hat with a plume, and the long walking-stick with a golden knob; can you not vividly conceive the magnificent monarch, as he gravely paces the gardens at Versailles, accompanied by his suite, who respectfully, and with heads uncovered, listen to his orders?"

"Bravo! Yes, yes!" exclaimed Waldemar. "Ah, pray go on!"

Countess Fransiska pursued her description, entering minutely into particulars;—the walls and bowers of foliage ingeniously adorned with flowers, wherein were placed classic statues; the sideboards and tables fixed around fountains; the rare and exquisite fruits with which the trees were hung; the magnificent pavilions which were raised for dramatic exhibitions, concerts, and dancing, enriched with garlands and sculpture, and enlivened by small cascades, which caused jets of water to spring into mussel shells, producing fairy-like illumination. At the same time, she followed the progress of the court through these enchanted gardens.

The narrative of the countess was as discreet as the official description; but for Waldemar Krone the historic interest was paramount, and hence his fair companion incurred a slight penalty for having so boldly mounted the reading-desk. While Waldemar ran over the list of

ladies and gentlemen who had been entertained at the tables of the king and queen, he found the names of Montespan and La Vallière, which led him to a nearer view of the situation. He was calculating the ages of the king and queen, and of monsieur and madame, when the countess replied with enthusiasm that it was a youthful court, in the fullness of youth and beauty.

"But in whose honor was the fête especially given?" asked Waldemar.

"The queen's, I suppose."

"Nominally, perhaps, but scarcely so in reality. This chivalrous king, countess, was by this time long tired of his consort. Afterward he had the fortune, perhaps the only time in his life, to be really loved, namely, by La Vallière; but so far as I remember, at this period, that is to say 1679, the poor duchess's star had already begun to wane, and Montespan was in the ascendant. Must we not be fairly orientalized when we think of the queen as indifferent, Vallière as a melancholy, and Montespan as a triumphant sharer in the fête? While you were talking of how the court rambled through the shady labyrinth, I was thinking that the king leaves the good queen a little in the lurch, goes past the faithful, sighing Vallière, and makes the brilliant Montespan happy with a tender word or two."

"Perhaps—but you are far better up in the history than I; let us rather have the conclusion of the fête. See here is the finale—fireworks! We see in the background the palace, at that time still the old Versailles of Louis XIII., illuminated; the park is brilliantly lighted, while the fountains gush water and flame at once; but suddenly the thickets emit fire, and the two great rocket-batteries send from both sides huge masses of flame up into the sky; it does not look like fireworks, but like the eruption of a volcano. The king's carriage occupies the foreground; his majesty sits alone on the back seat, and four ladies sideways in front. Not to draw down on myself more historical corrections or orientalizings, I shall admit that the four ladies are the

queen with her maid of honor, Montespan, and madame with hers, La Vallière. This was the finale! As the last rocket expired," concluded the countess, "the day, as the chronicle says, envious of these marvels of the night, began to show itself. The king drove in his coach-and-six, with torch-bearers riding in front, straight to St. Germain, and the court followed. Only the Dauphin, poor boy, who had supped in his chambers in the palace, and so seen little of the pageant, remained overnight at Versailles. Now, more than a hundred and sixty years have elapsed since that festive evening; all this greatness and splendor have long since gone down into the grave, and——"

"And," interrupted Waldemar, "here sit we, two children of a degenerate, prosaic age, in a miserable poor little country, and talk about it in a barbarous tongue; yes, I can supply the commentary."

"Is that all the thanks I get for my lecture?"

"No, I am really grateful to your ladyship, for we have been by the Seine and dreamt of the greatness of former times, thanks to your spirited and minute description; but you skipped the comedy entirely. I see a charming little idyl was played between two couples of amorous shepherds and shepherdesses. The text is plaintive, but judging from the engravings, it goes merrily on, and the trees are filled with musicians quite to the top. Might we not heighten the illusion if each took a part in the scene? Listen to the verse with which the entertainment begins:

"*Amour, que sous ton empire
On souffre des maux cuisans!
Je le puis bien dire
Puisque je le sens.*"

That is to say:

"*Ah, Love! how hard their fate
Who own thy cruel sway!
Too well I know their state,
Since I have pined for many a day.*"

Was that so badly translated?"

"Very well indeed."

"I have begun with Philenes's part; come then, dear countess, take you that of Chloris."

"Philenes and Chloris, indeed! No, I am too tired to play comedy, especially love scenes."

"Oh, do not say so, dearest Fransiska!" murmured Waldemar tenderly.

"But how could any one play comedy with *you*? You immediately fall out of your part," was her answer, with bewitchingly playful affectation, "and forget that my name is Chloris."

"Ah, then, *plus chère* Chloris!—ah, *belle charmante* Française."

Scarcely had Waldemar uttered the name *Françoise*, when the countess's features contracted with pain, and then became deadly pale; the young lover started and flushed high, as a single electrifying thought thrilled through a long chain of associations in his mind. This *Françoise* reminded him of the conclusion of Secretary Stolpe's unlucky story, and how well did that alleged love-passage with the Marquis of Beaufort agree with her enthusiasm for everything French! How natural, since this enthusiasm dated from her childhood, that on her first visit to a foreign land she had fallen in love with a French nobleman. Perhaps she had talked with her beloved marquis exactly on the same topic which she had discussed this evening; and this library, with all its treasures, was it indeed anything else than a mausoleum dedicated to his behoof? And perhaps he, Waldemar Krone, had this evening been nothing else than an assistant conjuror at the revival of this interred passion, the only reality of her existence! The countess sat pale, and with eyes downcast, and Waldemar stared at her with a dark look. It was characteristic of him, as of most sensitive people, that what he felt immediately expressed itself with evidence on his features, and that in a far higher degree than he was himself aware. It seemed to him as if a shade had stepped between the countess and him, and he looked too as if he

had seen a ghost. When the countess, therefore, raised her eyes again, she was so scared as to exclaim:

"Good gracious! Mr. Krone, what ails you? Are you ill?"

"No," answered Waldemar slowly, "it was only an unpleasant thought that occurred to me."

"The tea is served in the baroness's apartment," announced a servant, entering at the moment.

"Oh, I forgot poor Aunt Louise," said the countess, recovering herself, and hastily rising, "to whom I promised to introduce you sooner. She will be enlivened by the visit—but you know she very seldom leaves her own apartments; on the other hand, we sometimes spend the evening with her, for she always feels best then. May I ask your arm? Go before with the lights, Frands, by the great corridor. Now," continued the countess, "as an illustration to my lecture, I shall show you three portraits which you perhaps have not seen before, namely, those of La Vallière, Montespan, and Maintenon—but Chloris we have not got!"

"Nor Philenes either—I mean the right Philenes," answered Waldemar, with a peculiar tone.

The countess colored deeply, and then over her beautiful features there spread the same cold inanimate expression which Waldemar had seen on them once before, like a mask of wax. The effect on her was so strong that he regretted his thoughtless speech. The countess forgot to show him La Vallière and the other ladies, and shortly afterward they found themselves in the Baroness Louise's parlor. Here they found the count, Herr Sass, and Dr. Goldschmidt already assembled. The baroness sat, well supported by soft embroidered cushions, in a large easy-chair; she looked delicate, but the expression of her eyes was lively and good natured. She greeted Waldemar very kindly, and said a few touching words about the late chamberlain.

"I think," she went on, "that Mr. von Krone resembles his father and his uncle in feature, but the expression is entirely that of his late mother. I remember

well having seen her; she was one of the most beautiful and amiable ladies of her time; her sweetness of expression indeed marked her out among all others."

This flattering mention of his mother, and acknowledgment of her superiority, was something quite new to Waldemar; it came from a place where he had not in the least expected it, and thus made a more agreeable impression. He never conversed with the Baroness Louise either on that first evening or afterward without receiving similar evidences of her kindness of heart.

"Welcome to Gyldenholdt," said Dr. Goldschmidt to Waldemar with great liveliness. "It is very pleasant to get a native of Copenhagen over here. Were you able to tear yourself loose from the enjoyments of the capital without pain?"

"You observe, Krone," said the old count, with a dry laugh, "that the doctor does not find himself quite comfortable over here with us country clowns."

"Count," replied the physician, "I am really always quite misunderstood on this point."

"Is it not true," asked the Baroness Louise gently, "that you are tired of being with us?"

"By no means, your ladyship," was the warm answer. "That would be very ungrateful in me. People always have some want or craving, no doubt, but if I were back at Copenhagen again, I should miss the castle here and its amiable inhabitants."

"When one squeezes the doctor, a compliment can always be got out of him," said Sass, with a roll of his eyes.

The tea was handed round, for at Gyldenholdt they never sat down to table in the evening; when this was over, and the servant had gone away, the count said to Waldemar:

"Well, did you come to an understanding with my daughter about Louis XIV.?"

"The countess speaks on this subject like a troubadour, count; I was fascinated, but not yet converted."

"I quite agree with you in that; Louis XIV. was a great scamp; he systematically ruined the provincial nobles by drawing them to the court and tempting them to luxury. When the nobility consider themselves too good to live on their own estates, and so forsake their natural sphere, they go to destruction."

"I have another objection to the countess's enthusiasm for the great Louis, and the French nation in general," said Waldemar, looking down into his cup.

"And that is, Mr. Krone?" asked the countess, whose countenance had resumed its lively expression.

"That your ladyship will accustom yourself to despise everything Danish, and that thus you will become unpatriotic."

"There, too, I agree with Krone," replied the count; "we really have much here at home which deserves appreciation, and the poets have never said anything more foolish than that Denmark is a poor little land. That is what they are always singing, it seems to me."

"Quite so, count! If the countess will honor me with her attention, I must take an opportunity of delivering a lecture on this subject. Does your ladyship know much of our own literature, especially the ancient portion of it?—the Scandinavian ballads, for instance?"

"Why, Aunt Louise, Mr. von Krone seems to be just the man for you," said the countess. "You must know that aunt is quite full of stories about goblins and elves. Scandinavian ballads? No, they do not suit my fancy. Is not the refrain most commonly—haa, haa, haa! saa, saa, saa! or some such thing? It is in hideous bad taste." The countess laughed, and the others laughed with her, over the comic tone in which she said this.

"There is no help for it," continued Waldemar, sending a glance toward the countess; "I will venture a tilt with the shades from the great king's tomb, and I shall yet win you for Denmark! You shall hear the bird sing:

“ ‘There is sweetness to conquer the heart
In the deep dales,
Which the nightingales
And the birdlets about them impart.’ ”

“The birds always sing so miserably in music,” answered Fransiska.

“That I don’t know, for

“ ‘So lively in my mother-tongue
They sing as never abroad they sung!’ ”

And they sang

“ ‘Tis good to dwell in Denmark.’ ”

“One can hear that you have never been in foreign lands,” thoughtfully replied the countess.

“It is now ten o’clock,” said the count, looking at his watch and rising; “that is bed-time here—and would you believe, Mr. Krone, that, old as I am, I can easily count all the days I have gone later to bed.”

“If you wish to be good friends with my brother,” said the old baroness, “you must rise early, Mr. Krone.”

“I shall be ruled entirely by the custom of the house,” answered Waldemar, “though I cannot deny that hitherto I have verified the old proverb, ‘In the evening every spark in the ashes begs one to remain sitting, and in the morning every feather in the bed to remain lying.’ ”

“Fie on that proverb!” answered the count, “’tis so effeminate, one would doubt its being Danish. Good night!”

“That Mr. Krone is a charming young man, and so well bred,” said the doctor to Sass, as they left the house together.

“Why, yes,” answered Sass, “he quite cuts you out with the ladies. But wait a little till Count Wilhelm comes, and the pipe will get another tune; then, I expect, both Louis XIV. and the nightingales will be forgotten.”

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FAIRY MAIDEN.

THE two subsequent days passed with Waldemar like a pleasant dream, and no situation can be readily imagined affording more opportunities for the enjoyment of life, than that in which he found himself at this juncture. Cares he had none, and the hope of a golden future gave to each moment its own charm.

The next forenoon, after breakfast, the countess's little cabriolet, with its two diminutive black ponies, stood before the door, beside the great stone staircase; and the expression in Niels's fiery-red face, as his master conducted the countess to the carriage, was worth the trouble of observing. It was so sly, but yet so easily interpreted, that Father Hans, if he had been present, would again have inculcated on the lad the third chief point of his instructions.

The countess herself drove, and sped swiftly through the park, out into the wood; indeed, neither the two ponies, nor Frands who sat behind, would have corroborated the character which her ladyship the preceding evening had given herself, to wit, that she had begun to drive carefully. On the contrary, to show Waldemar the admirable training of the beasts, and her perfect control over them, she put their patience to so hard a test, that they ran wildly down an abrupt descent of the ground, and if Waldemar had not instantly come to her assistance, with a resolute exertion of his vigorous grasp, the drive might have ended very unpleasantly.

When the horses were quiet again, he restored the reins to the countess, brushed the foam from his sleeve, and said:

"Yesterday I thought, countess, that I had a Parisian belle before me; but to-day I must acknowledge my mistake, and give you the prouder epithet of Norse lady! Your boldness in driving is really quite English."

"Ah, it is only a Jutland girl that is in question. I thought till now that the provincial in my nature was entirely eradicated, but that this is not the case I have shown by giving occasion to such a scene."

"Only a Jutland girl! that delights me, for thus I become your compatriot, in so far as my father was born in Jutland. And to my thinking, neither of us need be ashamed of it."

"So, then, we are a pair of Jutland pitchers, as the saying is," she answered, laughing. "Peace be with your innocent patriotism! Is it really such a delightful idea to have been born amid these tiresome moors?"

"Now you are unjust, countess, or rather—ungrateful! Look around you! How beautiful this must be in summer! What a charming prospect down to the clear rivulet and its wooded knolls; even the wildness of the other side enhances the effect!"

"Nature is a niggard in her gifts here, Krone; always, as you say, needing enhancement! Wait till you have seen France, Switzerland, and Italy! Here everything is but gray in comparison."

"Well, even then," answered Waldemar, with whom patriotism, albeit a natural and warm sentiment, was yet sharpened by the thought of the Marquis of Beaufort, "even then, after seeing the fairest countries in Europe,—and it is very probable that I may one day accomplish this desire,—on my return home I shall love my native land the more dearly."

"You hardly know yourself," pursued he, after a pause, "what a genuine Dane you are, just in your enthusiasm for everything foreign. It is a natural weakness; a Frenchman would grudge thus to exalt another country, or another nation, than his own."

"That is, at any rate, an original view of the matter,"

answered the countess. "When one is born in such a mighty land as France, to boast of it is unavoidable."

"It is conceit! merely their national conceit," persisted he; "an uneasiness lest others should fail to admire them, and we should avoid being infected by it. The smaller and poorer our Fatherland is, the more glorious its exploits, and the greater our love for it."

"I feel as though you were giving me a lesson in the A B C. You are so demonstrative in argument that I become quite a simpleton in my own eyes."

"Heaven forbid, dear countess!" he returned. "But your cause was a weak one, I think, and humility, you know, is always the first step toward repenting;" so they drove the rest of the way home in silence.

In the evening Waldemar accompanied the count to the billiard-room, and received a lesson in the art of "doubling;" but the countess did not show herself in the library.

The whole of next day Waldemar surrendered entirely to the count, and it was a real sacrifice to wander about with him through field and wood for six hours on end. The old gentleman was an indefatigable pedestrian, and put even his young guest seriously to the test in that respect. Thanks to an easy temper and active life, the count showed few signs of his seventy years; he felt his age most, he said, when he sat down or rose up, but once out and on the trot, he quite forgot he was old.

The count entertained Waldemar Krone with narrations about old days, about the difficulties he had to contend with when he received the barony, and he blamed the short-sightedness of the young when they thought that the good times could never have an end. These remarks seemed to be directed at Count Wilhelm, and, on the whole, it was easily seen that the count liked to give the heir-apparent a hit. Waldemar observed that the count was far more friendly and cordial in his own house than in a foreign territory; and the oftener they conversed together the higher rose the young man's esteem for his host. Whatever might be the cause, it

was certain that the count, in his intercourse with Waldemar, far exceeded the usual limits of his communicativeness. He soon found reason to regret that he thereby encouraged the young man to an intimacy which it had not been his aim to foster.

Count Wilhelm had arrived on the evening he had promised, and the lively boisterous heir-apparent soon made his presence felt and heard. He expressed great pleasure in seeing his friend Krone, and, during the very first *tête-à-tête* conversation which they had, the purchase of Tiornholm was broached. He informed Waldemar that, if no purchaser appeared for the property, it would be put up to auction, and the safest way was to anticipate this. He represented the matter in so tempting a light, that Waldemar resolved to inquire more particularly into it. He indeed remembered his uncle's admonition, but he thought that this need not hinder the scheme of the diplomatic career; for though he were to invest the bulk of his fortune in Tiornholm, he need not therefore bury himself in the country.

Next morning, accordingly, he applied to the old count for his advice, communicating, at the same time, Count Wilhelm's information, with the proposal of the latter that they should go over the same day to Tiornholm and view the estate. The count was surprised on hearing this, but answered, in a composed tone, that he dared not take upon him to give advice in such a matter. He only called Krone's attention to the fact that, whatever object he had in view, he should take no decided step without procuring his guardian's consent.

Scarcely had Waldemar left the count's chamber, when young Gyldenholdt was summoned thither; and judging from the heightened color and angry looks of the nephew on his return, the conversation between him and the old man had been of a less friendly nature. Somewhat later came Sass, and from the count's remarks to him, we may best learn his opinion.

"It is very provoking to me, Sass," said he, "that Count Wilhelm, with his usual rashness, will inveigle

young Krone into so serious a business. Their friendship at present is so hot, and Krone will at length become our neighbor; I am afraid that my admonitions to my nephew will have no effect, and I beg you will therefore argue his friend out of the notion; but if you cannot succeed in this, I should wish you rather to take the management of the matter yourself. For my part, I will have nothing to do with it; but for what happens under my own eyes, and in my own house, I am answerable; and I know that you may in any case at least hinder the young man from making a stupid bargain and wasting his money."

Sass appeared quite ignorant about the matter, but promised to do his best. Shortly after, they all assembled round the breakfast-table, and when Countess Fransiska heard that Waldemar Krone proposed going by Tiornholm to Dyrland, she said: "When you come to Tiornholm, don't forget to take a look at the famous old oak-tree. According to Aunt Louise's story, a fair maiden dwells inside; and if you place a new silver coin in a crack, knocking thrice on the trunk, the fairy appears with a mirror in which you may see marvelous things—people long since dead, or your worst foe, or your future bride. If she appears twice to the same individual, it is a sign of approaching death. There are many who have seen her—for instance, aunt's special *protégée*, Kirsten Mari; but, according to her account, no one comes away from the good sorceress without some little memorial. A certain Marien Nielsdatter became blind of one eye, which the fairy maiden had touched with her finger; one, Stine Aunsden, got an affection of the heart; but Kirsten Mari herself got off with a tuft of gray hair. For the fairy took hold of it, and the lock she thus touched immediately became white."

"The carriage stands at the door, Count Wilhelm," said Christian, the footman.

"Have you courage, then, Mr. Krone," continued the countess, laughing, "to conjure the fairy forth?"

"Nay, that I surely have," answered Waldemar, rising from the table; "I shall remember to find the great oak, and give you a truthful account of what adventure I meet with there."

"That is well," replied the lady merrily; "but don't forget that the silver coin must be quite new."

Count Wilhelm's two powerful sorrel horses soon brought them to Tiornholm. While they drove into the court-yard, he said: "Is not this a charming situation, Krone? You will not easily find such a pearl of an estate as Tiornholm. Honestly, now, I envy you the ability to purchase it. Do you open your eyes at that? I have, indeed, at this moment not a farthing to lay out, whatever I may hereafter get, if you do not stand in my way."

"Certainly more beautiful surroundings could not be imagined," replied Waldemar, as he contemplated the landscape which lay before them; "that terrace-shaped sinking of the land toward the sea, and those magnificent woods,—it is peerless!"

"The soil here, too, is incredibly fertile, and in the wood there is timber worth many thousand rix-dollars; for the last few years no more has been cut than was barely necessary. And so I shall have hard words from uncle, because I wished to advise you to a bargain which, perhaps, may double your fortune."

"But," continued the count, after a pause, "when I have shown you the place, I have done my part, and will meddle no more with it, merely because I don't wish to be found fault with by my uncle afterward. We young people, I must tell you, understand nothing of the world! Now, Krone, if after having seen everything here to-day you shall determine to purchase Tiornholm, then go to old Sass, and let him alone conduct the business for you. I have already spoken with him, and know his friendly disposition toward you. You may trust as confidently to his capacity as to his honesty, but you must show him unlimited confidence."

The proprietor of Tiornholm and her brother, Mr. Resen, were not at home. This happened fortunately,

Count Wilhelm thought, for they could thus examine everything with less constraint. This they proceeded to do without delay, and the count pointed out to Waldemar the weak part of the property, namely, the decayed condition of the buildings. The office-houses were indifferent, and the dwelling-house threatened to become uninhabitable. This circumstance was, however, just one of Mrs. Resen's objects in selling, as she did not wish in her old days to build, and her brother, who was a gentleman of the bedchamber, lately come across from Copenhagen, did his utmost to induce his sister to quit this desolate place, and spend her old age more pleasantly in the capital, near other members of her family.

While the count and Waldemar were viewing the estate, the former learnt that there was a pair of good work-horses for sale at a neighboring farm, and as his friend Krone was too much occupied in the inspection of Tiornholm, he went over alone to look at them, promising to return immediately.

Waldemar was very glad to be left for a few moments to his own meditations, for his mind was more excited on the subject than he allowed his friend Gyldenholdt to perceive. On seeing Tiornholm, and learning that his means were sufficient for such an immense purchase, he got a more distinct idea of the value of his inheritance. Tiornholm was certainly a handsomer investment for capital than the old gray mansion in Amalie Street with its miniature garden; the woods were somewhat different from that esplanade with its stunted trees; the sea, which rolled its clear waves against the shore only three hundred yards from the house, a more enlivening prospect than the pavement of Amalie Street and the dull houses opposite.

Waldemar went round the garden, and with his keen perception of the beautiful and his lively imagination, he saw at once what Tiornholm might become. He fancied the old decayed mansion-house away, and a new and tasteful dwelling erected on another site; in fancy

he cleared away a part of the wood which obscured the prospect, and he enlarged the garden down to the shore; and while thus picturing the future, he went much further than we shall at the present moment follow him. The sum of his dream may be comprehended in this thought: "Though Fransiska Gyldenholdt be a brilliant gem, yet have I found a setting worthy even of her."

Suddenly he remembered the countess's amusing description of the fairy maiden, and as he at the same time felt a great desire to penetrate deeper into the wood, he resolved to inspect the remarkable old oak-tree. The gardener showed him a path which led straight to it, and told him that he would easily distinguish the tree, partly from its immense circumference, and partly because a bench stood beside it.

With the light step of a happy man, Waldemar went through the wood, and every large tree on the way he contemplated with the pleasant feeling that perhaps he might soon be able to call it his own, but he was very far from estimating their value in money. At last, near the outskirts of the wood, toward the north, appeared the ancient oak with its mighty gray trunk, the circumference of which was about fifteen yards. Full of admiration of this gigantic size, and the many vigorous shoots which the parent stem sent out on all sides, he went round the tree to take a right view of it; but he then became aware first of the skirt of a blue dress, then had a glimpse of a black fur pelisse, and lastly beheld a most undeniable silk hood, the claret-colored border of which was turned back, edging a handsome pale profile. He started, and came nearer, while the fallen leaves, crisp with frost, rustled sharp beneath his tread. The lady, who sat on the bench, rose up, looked round, and sank down again on the bench with an expression of extreme surprise; but Waldemar was instantly by her side, grasped her hand, and said:

"Ida, dear Ida! Is it really you? Whence in all the world have you come *here*?"

Ida's heart beat so fast that she could hardly speak; her color rose, and tears came in her eyes.

"And you?" asked she, drawing back her trembling little hand.

"I—yes, I am on a visit to the count at Gyldenholdt. Ah—a light dawns on me! Count Wilhelm showed me in the distance a village which he called Bonderup, and I knew from Bruun, whom I saw in Copenhagen, that you were with Pastor Kortsen at Bonderup; but it never occurred to me that this was your Bonderup, for of course it is so? What a singular coincidence, Ida, that we two should meet here! It is long since we sat thus together."

"Yes, it is indeed so!" answered Ida in a more composed tone, as she succeeded by an effort in recovering herself.

"Are you really angry with me still?" asked Walde-mar, after a little pause. "Well, I admit that you have cause for it; but on more accounts than one I shall make no attempt to excuse my seeming neglect of you and yours. Here am I, dear Ida, ready to make all right again, so let mercy take the place of justice!"

"You make short process," answered Ida with an arch smile, which, however, immediately became uncertain, and died away. "You accuse, defend, and acquit yourself all in a breath. In that fashion it is easy to win one's cause."

"Would you then have me to lose it?"

"It is not worth speaking about any more," was her reply, in a tone which she strove to make cheerful. "We have been parted, and have met again, and I have no ground at all to find fault with you."

"Am I become then of so little consequence in your eyes?"

"We are not accustomed in Stromby to forget our old friends; that you know well."

"But is my fault then greater than I have myself perceived? have you any difficulty in forgiving me?"

"If that expression is to be used," said Ida gently,

"I have forgiven you without any difficulty. It matters little, however, since we are likely to separate again as hastily as we have met."

"There you are greatly mistaken, Ida!" returned he with animation. "You will certainly remain at Bonderup till spring, and I—well—I had better tell you at once, that—the ground we sit on at this moment I may perhaps soon call my own; in short, I think of purchasing Tiornholm."

A slight nervous shudder passed over Ida Stainforth as she learnt this news, and then followed some moments of deep silence; but Waldemar saw that her eyes glistened with some sad emotion, and at the same moment she rose up to go.

"Dear, kind Ida," said Waldemar, with warmth, "you cannot long continue to be angry with me: come, give me your hand; we will be good friends again, as in the old days."

She gave it to him frankly, while smiling through her tears, and Waldemar, though without reading their full import, gazed earnestly on her candid face. He accompanied her out of the wood, and the conversation before they parted had taken a warmer tone than was very becoming for him at a time when he was paying court to another lady. With a full heart, agitated too by the most opposite emotions—gladness at the meeting, and dissatisfaction with herself—Ida hastened over the meadow without once turning round; Waldemar, on the other hand, remained standing and looking after her, till the last glimpse of the blue dress had disappeared among the bushes in the pastor's garden.

He went back to Tiornholm in a frame of mind more deeply excited, but not nearly so buoyant as when he had left it. Now first occurred to him the fable of the fairy maiden, and he was forced to own that he had not visited her dwelling quite scathless. Certainly he had put no silver coin into the bark of the tree, but feelings more precious had been left beside it, and costlier words had been dropped there. And the fairy's mirror had

shown him what he least expected to see; but could it have shown him anything better? Ida's manner had implied more than her words expressed, and he could surely not be mistaken in believing that she cherished a warm regard toward him, so that his previous neglect had wounded her more than he supposed till then. This pained him, and he longed to make amends for his fault.

Shortly after came Count Wilhelm, and they drove to Dyrland, where Waldemar was kindly and unceremoniously received by the count's mother, and his sister, Countess Adelaide. This last regarded Waldemar with more than common attention; and one might read in her intelligent eyes that she had heard something about him before. This also came to light in one of the conversations she had with him during the few days he remained at Dyrland. She asked him if he knew that at Bonderup parsonage two old friends of his were at present residing, and if he should like to visit them? Next she expressed herself cordially about the Kortsens, —her best friends, as she called them, and declared that her acquaintance with young Miss Stainforth afforded her lively satisfaction.

"I must own," concluded she, "that she pleases me more than any young girl I have ever known. I think less about her beauty than her goodness of heart and purity of soul. She is perfectly natural,—and how much is included in that merit! How many people are so good that they please by appearing just what they are? Most of us appear sometimes better, sometimes worse than the reality; we dissemble in various ways."

"It surprises me," said Count Wilhelm's mother, "that Miss Stainforth is so quiet; she is remarkably grave for a girl of her age."

"Yes," replied Countess Adelaide, "I have often asked myself if she can possibly be laboring under any secret pain of mind; but along with this seriousness there is a certain calm in all her conduct which shows me that if she has a sorrow she has not brought it on her-

self by any fault of her own. I would give much to see her once cheerful and happy, for that would make her perfectly charming!"

"Shall you soon be coming to Gyldenholdt?" asked Waldemar, who wished to change the subject.

"I do not think so," answered the countess with reluctance. "We rarely go there. But, on the other hand," she added with more liveliness, "Uncle Arthur himself visits us occasionally."

Waldemar was rather surprised to find how matters stood in this respect, and still more at a circumstance which now occurred to him for the first time, namely, that Countess Fransiska had never by a single word mentioned her aunt and cousin to him.

CHAPTER IX.

A SHADOW.

DURING the two days which Waldemar spent at Dyrland, Fransiska von Gyldenholdt was grave and thoughtful; the increased solitude, however, seemed to agree with her present mood, and after meals she retired to her own chamber. She sat there on the morning of the day which was expected to bring back the two young men ere night. It was a delightful boudoir in the uppermost story of the great turret, with the most beautiful prospect over the ample forest to stream and hill beyond.

The fair countess sat by her writing-desk, and, from a reverie in which various thoughts evidently contended, she yielded at length to some repressed impulse. Suddenly opening a drawer, whence she took a little gold locket, opened it by pressing on a spring, and, with heightened color, gazed on a miniature portrait there

inclosed. It was that of a gentleman with regular features, dark hair and moustache, and confident look, wearing at his button-hole the red ribbon of the Legion of Honor. Intently viewing it, she exclaimed, in the words with which Lamartine has celebrated the day-break :

“C'est lui, c'est le jour!
C'est lui, c'est la vie!
C'est lui, c'est l'amour!”

The shawl which was cast loosely round her shoulders slid down on the chair, her bosom heaved as her breath went and came, and the golden-brown tresses fell down over both the portrait and her blushing face.

“How long it is since I last looked at it!” said she to herself. “I fancied I had become strong, and yet it is still so—I cannot forget him! Is he then really as false and faithless as they said?”

She laid by the locket, took out some letters, and after having read them, continued :

“And he could write to me thus! Here is the letter in which he tells me of his marriage, and promises me that if fate make it but possible he will hasten back to me. These three other letters were written to me while his wife was living, and the last seems as warm as the first. Since her death I have not heard from him, and yet he is neither dead nor ill. The Countess Furst, who came straight from Paris, saw him two months ago dancing at a ball with the Duchess of Praslin. It is now thirteen months since he was free, and not a word has been heard from him! It is evident that he has forgotten me; but as he cannot live without love, another must have driven me from his heart.”

She laid the letters in the drawer again, shut it violently, and paced up and down the floor, while she continued her soliloquy:

“Would that I could also forget him and the happy days we spent together in Baden! Yes, then I was happy! O God, what has my whole life been in comparison with the one month I spent in his society! He

loved me,—yes, he really loved me, and I shall never see him more!

“What have I got in his place? What has drawn me toward Krone, and what perhaps also repels me from him, is just that he resembles Beaufort. And how does Krone resemble him? When I look in his brown eyes, and listen to his voice—yes, especially his voice—it is sometimes almost as if I sat in the vine-covered summer-house in Baden. With what terror he struck me lately by calling me *Françoise*. *Françoise*! Oh how charmingly Beaufort used to utter my name; and what can cause the heart to swell like the sound of the beloved one's voice? There was truly something of Beaufort in Krone's '*Françoise*!'”

“And yet he is not Beaufort—far from it! A man like him is not to be found in poor Denmark. Krone has intellect, and is far superior to all the fools who for so long a time have swarmed around me; but even his courtesy is commonplace in comparison with Beaufort's knightly gallantry. Was not his bearing like that of a prince of the blood that glorious evening when he sat beside me, and told me about the French Court now and in the olden times, and described to me the great estates of his family? And yet how far was it from coldness, from abstraction! No, none I ever knew had his art, none understood how to join so much warmth of manner with such refinement. Even when angry, he was handsome; how completely did my soul bend before his stronger will. He was the only man breathing before whom I could condescend to humble myself. The comparison forces itself upon me, and again and again 'tis plain that Krone cannot sustain it. Yet he does well enough; life by his side would be more endurable than with any one else here. I cannot longer suffer this empty life; years pass on, and before I am aware of it I shall be old. I could almost hate François for all the pain and mortification his faithlessness has caused and will cause me. How often have I not been weary of myself, and of everything! And yet I am now so weak

as to engage myself with—this shadow of my ideal! Ah, no! François Beaufort is the shadow, the image of my dreams; it is Waldemar Krone that seems doomed to become the matter-of fact, the mere reality.

“I must take some resolve; I have encouraged him so much, that the end of the drama approaches. My father will open his eyes; but it cannot be helped! We must raise Krone up to our own level, and I am certain that he will not do us any discredit. He worships me, and will bear me aloft through life. Farewell, then, thou lordly and splendid, yet faithless De Beaufort! Farewell all golden dreams of happiness; be welcomed, thou honest mediocrity! And so, forward—without another glance back!”

CHAPTER X.

CRITICAL.

THE days passed on, and Waldemar had been a month in Jutland without any important change having occurred in his position. Negotiations about the purchase of Tiornholm were set on foot; a correspondence concerning it was entered into with Chamberlain Blom; and Bailiff Sass, though behind the curtains, was the person who conducted this affair, so important to our hero. Waldemar divided his time between Gyldenholdt and Dyrlund, and even seemed to have a preference for the last-named place. Though no coolness had arisen between the Countess Fransiska and him, yet they had drawn back somewhat from each other, and their intercourse had no longer so warm a tone as during the first days of his stay at Gyldenholdt. It almost seemed as if the countess wished that the catastrophe she anticipated should be somewhat delayed.

To be at Dyrland was the same thing as to be every day in the society of Ida; nay, she once came on a visit there for eight days at once. After the meeting at the great oak, he had not delayed to pay a visit to the parsonage, where he was cordially welcomed by the pastor, though Madame Kortsen made him pass through a sharp purgatory of her notice. But nothing was better suited to bring Ida nearer to Waldemar than the coldness and distrust, quite disproportioned to his shortcomings, which the good Aunt Lene discovered toward him. True, the two first times he came to the parsonage Ida herself was distant in her behavior toward him; but her aunt's prejudice appeared to her a great injustice, and as Waldemar continued his visits, and seemed to be earnestly desirous to make advances to her, she could no longer offer resistance to these.

The third time, he came in company with Count Wilhelm, the countess his mother, and his sister Adelaide. How many pleasant hours had Ida already enjoyed in the society of these kind-hearted, unaffected people; but what did these hours not become now that Waldemar had joined the circle! How cordial he was in his manner, how lively and full of humor were his remarks, and how delightful it was to be near him, and to be the object of all the little attentions which few understood to show toward a lady in so agreeable and varied a style as now did Waldemar Krone! It pleased Ida more than she would confess to herself, that by degrees he treated her in a far less sisterly manner than at their first encounter in Tiornholm Wood; and thus all her doubts and uncertainties were gradually hushed to rest. She gave herself up entirely to her feelings, and, as the sun in spring tempts forth from the depths of the woods hosts of flowers which during winter had lain asleep, so almost daily some new grace developed itself in her; and Waldemar contemplated with glad surprise what was indirectly, but in a higher degree than he himself conceived, his own work.

Countess Adelaide thus obtained, before she looked

for it, the accomplishment of her desire to see Ida cheerful and happy, and the effect surpassed even her expectation. Of course it was not long before she penetrated the girl's real feelings, and she made at the same time another discovery, which had entirely escaped her young friend's observation. Count Wilhelm, who at the first hasty glimpse of Ida on the streets of Copenhagen had been struck with her beauty, seemed now to be more and more drawn toward her. True enough, the heir-apparent of Gyldenholdt, as his sister well knew, had often been in love before, and it had passed away again as quickly as it had come; but Ida's attractions were far beyond the average, and her innocent frankness agreed well with his taste. That her brother some day would make a match entirely from inclination, Countess Adelaide had always expected, as she was in this respect far more free from prejudice than most people of her class; but she knew the obstacles such a union would meet with from Gyldenholdt, and she saw that her brother had made no impression on the young lady, whose heart was drawn to another quarter. It was, moreover, evident that the prospect of a title would not weigh in the balance with a girl like Ida. Adelaide therefore wished that her brother might be cured in time of his increasing passion.

And now as regarded Waldemar Krone. How should the friendly observer interpret his conduct? She had heard with surprise of his interesting position in regard to her haughty cousin, for it seemed to her very improbable that serious views could be intended on that side. The report had only first drawn her attention from the moment when she heard Waldemar spoken of by the inmates of the parsonage, and she then got two very dissimilar representations of the young gentleman; one very unfavorable, through some bitter and sarcastic remarks of Madame Kortsen, and a directly opposite one from the few words drawn forth through questioning Ida. After having now seen him, and had some intercourse with him, she took Ida's view. She observed,

indeed, that he was of an impulsive temperament, and easily captivated, and that his aspirations toward the great world were somewhat ambitious; so that in various points he sympathized far less with Ida than either of themselves appeared conscious; but yet she discovered by the side of this so much that was good and generous, that there seemed nothing to hinder the belief of his sincere affection for so early a companion, or even of his deepening attachment in this quarter. She had, moreover, never seen him in the company of Cousin Fransiska, and she had thus no distinct idea of their mutual relations. She was thus very hopeful on Ida's account, firmly believing she had never seen two people who in all essential matters were so well suited to make each other happy.

All these meditations engaged her while the others were occupied around, both young and old, in keeping up the usual cheerful sociality of hospitable roofs, substantial though plain, during winter-time in the country. The good Countess Adelaide herself, as was her wont, heard more than she was heard. She could not conceal from her own best wishes the fear lest, in spite of the smiling surface which the little company offered, elements of serious unhappiness and vexation might yet be present; and she remembered again the opinions of Madame Kortsen, who too often augured evil where her preconceptions were in question.

The ladies had gone into the bedroom to get on their things, but Ida had not as usual accompanied them. The pastor had taken Count Wilhelm into his study to show him a sample of grain, and thus Waldemar and Ida were for the moment left alone.

"What do you think, then, of the country in Jutland?" asked Waldemar, after a short pause.

"I think the district around charming," answered Ida, turning toward him her happy face. "It is all such a novelty to one brought up in Stromby! And yet the surroundings at home are as dear to me as ever; they are to me like an old friend, whom I love so much that I cannot perceive that his features are plain."

"You plead the cause of Stromby in a better fashion than your aunt, who lately maintained quite seriously that nothing here can be compared with the plantation of hazels, and the mill canal with the old willow; and yet we have seen the whole here at its worst season."

"Ah, how I delight in spring!" answered Ida.

"We shall see to it, Ida," said he, "that you remain over there—ay, and longer!"

Ida blushed against her will; but thereupon she hastily said:

"Is it true that Gyldenholdt is far prettier than this?"

"Prettier? Oh no," briefly answered Waldemar.

"I cannot fancy anything finer than the view between Bonderup and Tiørnholm. Do you return to Gyldenholdt to-morrow? How do you like your residence there?"

"Why, very well on the whole," was the answer, in a similar laconic style.

"What sort of people are the family there?" she went on; "scarcely so amiable, I should think, as their relatives at Dyrland?"

"Why so?" asked Waldemar rather sensitively.

"Ah, I don't know; but at Dyrland they always say so little about their Gyldenholdt friends."

"That looks ungrateful," he returned, "for the old count, at least, shows them all due kindness."

"Perhaps it rather applies," explained Ida, involuntarily hesitating, "to the relations between the two households. None of them had said anything against the Countess Fransiska herself, indeed they have not mentioned her name; but from the report of her beauty, I should have liked to see her. Is it true that she is so distant and haughty?"

The entrance of Count Wilhelm and the pastor freed Waldemar from the necessity of reply to this delicate question; but it awakened various painful emotions in his mind, and these discovered themselves so evidently in his countenance that Ida felt she had said something

which was disagreeable to him. She had heard so little about the countess and about Waldemar's residence there, of which he himself never spoke, that the key to its explanation was entirely wanting to her. Consequently, though she felt an unpleasant presentiment, it was still a mere passing one.

"Ah, my good Madame Kortsen!" said Adelaide Gyldenholdt gayly, as she drew on her gloves in the bedroom before leaving, "I have a little crow to pluck with you, if you will excuse the phrase!"

"What, so—soh?" promptly returned Aunt Lene, crossing her arms and bending her head a little back, while she looked pleasantly at the countess; "and from what nest may it come, dear?"

"Do you remember that on the occasion of Chamberlain Krone's death we talked about his nephew? This was before I had myself made his acquaintance, and you spoke of the young man in such a way as to give me a low opinion of him. I thought he must certainly be conceited and heartless. Now, I know him very well, and to my surprise—perhaps because there has been a great improvement—I find him really good-hearted and amiable."

"Do you think so, countess? Well, it may really be the case, yet I wish he were fifty miles away from here."

"I cannot agree with you in that; I think the whole affair will end in making our dear Ida happy for life."

"I must see that before I believe it; you view the matter from the bright side, because you are so much younger than me, I suppose. Now, no one wishes more cordially than I to see my darling happy, but, dear countess, I don't believe that this will lead to happiness for her."

"What do you think of our new friend Mr. Krone?" asked Count Wilhelm's mother of the pastor's wife, at the other end of the room.

"Very much indeed, madame!" was the hearty re-

sponse. "I cannot tell you how glad and how grateful I am for all the enlivenment that has been brought into our home this winter. It is a real charity toward one like me, who has a tendency to brood and despond. You have always been faithful friends to us, dear Madame von Gyldenholdt, but I cannot suppose it is altogether on my account that our guest meets you, I am happy to say, far oftener now at the parsonage than in former times."

"Mr. Krone pays great attention to Miss Stainforth. That would be an excellent match for her; do you think it will come to anything?"

"It looks like it, and you may believe it would give us great satisfaction if the dear child should do so well as that."

"I think such a remarkably fine girl as Ida Stainforth deserves to be happy," said the old countess emphatically. "I must, however, tell you that at first I thought that it meant nothing, for it is said that Mr. Krone was at one time paying great court to my niece at Gyldenholdt. If that be true, I am glad he has turned his eyes elsewhere, for *she* would only look on him as presumptuous, unless, indeed—well, well—the upright, sweet-tempered, sensible Ida is certainly a very different choice; and as for money, he has plenty of it himself."

"Assuredly," answered the pastor's good wife with surprise, "we never heard the least word of such a thing as Mr. Krone seeking favor with the Countess Fransiska. I must guard against telling that to my sister-in-law. Lene has a strange, rooted distrust of Krone, but the good Lene is sometimes too obstinate and unreasonable."

The next Sunday morning early, Madame Kortsen and Ida sat in the room they shared together, which, like every spot in Bonderup parsonage, was snug and comfortable. A roaring log-fire in the stove began to overcome the coldness of the night; the sun had newly risen, and sent his gleaming but faint beams through the

frozen panes. Madame Kortsen sat wrapt in her large gray shawl by a little table near the window, and wrote with her back turned to the sofa, where Ida reclined, looking out at the panes, gilded and colored by the rays of light that shone on the frost. There was stillness in the room, and nothing was heard but the scratching of Aunt Lene's pen on the paper.

Judging by the first glance, the portrait we gave of Ida in the description of Christmas at Stromby was no longer like her. Her whole form had developed; she was both taller and stouter. The softer outline made her figure more perfect, giving to her motions the maturer grace they now possessed; her bust was fine; above all, her carriage had gained an inexpressible ease and dignity through the successful effort at self-control. Shortly before her leaving home an incident had occurred to illustrate this description. An artist, who had traveled much, once met with Ida in company at her father's house; the friend who had there introduced him was led to express wonder at his silence during the visit, and questioned him afterward why he had not better employed the opportunity of talking to such an attractive girl. He had replied that the visit had been a study to him; for though he had indeed seen beauty more dazzling, he had never beheld a more perfect model than Ida Stainforth's countenance and entire appearance furnished. He added that the placid self-possession of her motions made her charms complete, while evidencing her own unconsciousness of their full extent; for if she had known the impression she produced, it must in some way or other have caused her confusion.

This innocent repose, this unconsciousness of the admiration excited, which purity of heart always bestows, never entirely left her; but to-day there was a pleasurable excitement apparent, showing that her heart was full, and that the blood coursed sprightlier than usual through her veins.

Madame Kortsen's writing went slowly on; in truth it was always a troublesome business to the worthy lady

to set pen to paper; for in her young days ladies did not excel in caligraphy, and this did not improve in after-years, as the sight became impaired and the fingers grew stiff. But this day it appeared that something more important made her pen stand still. She scratched her nose with the end of it, and entirely forgetting Ida's presence, she thought aloud:

"There seems to be a real fatality about it!"

Ida rose, went to the window, sat down on a chair opposite her aunt, and looked her archly in the face while she asked:

"What is the matter, then, Aunt Lene?"

"Oh—nothing particular, Ida."

"Tell me what it is; let me for once give you a bit of good advice, for you in your day, you know, have given me many!"

"Yes, indeed! You are just the right person to ask counsel from in this matter."

"Does it then concern me?"

"It does indeed," answered Madame Kortseh resolutely. "Since you *will* know it, I shall tell you what I was thinking of—just of going back to Stromby."

Ida started; she did not require much time to perceive the meaning of the old lady, and her face took an expression of vexation; but this soon passed away. She pressed her ripe lips tightly, gave a slightly willful toss of her fair head, and answered in a firm tone:

"That is not your serious purpose, surely, Aunt Lene?"

"Yes, indeed it is!"

"Indeed—then you must travel alone, for I will not accompany you."

"What does the girl say! Are you actually not willing to go home to your father and mother?"

"No, not just now! Both father and mother would disapprove of our running off from Bonderup in bad weather. Uncle and aunt would be vexed, too, at our leaving before the time fixed, without any sufficient

reason. And lastly, a voyage at this time of year is no trifle for your weak chest."

"Oh, indeed? Would you have had all those excellent reasons for remaining at hand a month ago?"

"Certainly I would," answered Ida blushing; "as certainly as you a month ago had no thought of such a journey."

Madame Kortsen only shook her head in an oracular manner.

"Why should we do so?" asked Ida.

"In short, child," answered her aunt crossly, "it would be better for us that we should leave this place."

"No, no," said Ida, kissing the old lady, "you cannot possibly mean it. Without reasonable grounds you could not and would not travel,—and had such been present, of course I would have gone with you."

With tears in her eyes, Ida now walked up and down the floor, while her aunt scribbled on again in her letter to Clara Bruun. They were disconsolate words she wrote, which would have entirely destroyed Ida's peace of mind could she have read them; and she expressed herself so distrustfully about Waldemar, that her niece would have had difficulty in forgiving her had it come to her knowledge.

In Stromby they had of course received the news of Waldemar Krone's arrival with great surprise, and not without vexation. Aunt Lene's letters could scarcely help them to see the matter from the bright side; but as all that Ida had recently written testified to the cheerfulness of her present mood, and even her aunt's letters set forth that Waldemar was a constant visitor at the parsonage, the kind-hearted Clara imagined that, perhaps, she might have been the unconscious instrument in the hand of Providence for making Ida happy. Mrs. Stainforth was inclined to think so too; whereas the captain held more to his sister's view of the subject,—viz., that Waldemar's intimacy was either without serious intentions on his part, or was viewed by Ida in a mistaken light. All were, however, united in the opinion

that there was nothing to be done but patiently to await the result: for Providence would scarcely have brought her so unexpectedly in contact with him again without some important design, though whether for weal or woe remained to be seen.

Ida put on her things to go to church, and was soon on the road; she was alone, because neither of her aunts dared venture out for the cold, and the church lay a quarter of a Danish mile from the parsonage. She had not gone very far when she heard the tramp of horse-hoofs behind her, and turning round she saw that it was Waldemar Krone, who came riding with a servant after him.

He rode the young countess's gray horse, which she had once for all placed at his disposal, and she would not allow him to ride unaccompanied. He but seldom made use of it, but to-day the fine frosty weather tempted him out; and he had, besides, an errand to the Resens at Tiornholm. It is perhaps to be doubted if he remembered that it was Sunday, and at Gyldenholdt there was no one who assumed the obligation to remind him of it. The old count was a regular church-goer, but he never spoke on religious subjects; and since young Krone persisted in the purchase of Tiornholm, the old man discovered a certain dread of close intimacy; so that the former was now more left to himself, and generally did not see the count before dinner-time. The old baroness held her devotions privately in her own chamber, and Countess Fransiska sometimes showed her aunt the attention of listening with her to the discourse read aloud by her lady-companion. To church she only went on high occasions, and it would seem that she regarded her visits there principally as a mark of attention to the pastor and the people of the district.

"Good morning, Ida!" shouted Waldemar merrily, and dismounting from his horse; "whither away so early?"

"To church, Waldemar," was her answer.

"In this cold weather? You are sure to catch cold,—you ought rather to stay purposely away!"

"I am not so frightened about my health."

"Well, I could almost have been glad to go with you,—that is to say, I will go to the church, but no farther. Take my horse, Frands, and ride at an even pace over to Tiørnholm; I shall go by the foot-path through the wood."

Thereupon he went with Ida down the way toward church, which here diverged from the carriage-road.

"What enjoyment is there in going to church in the country here, dear Ida?" said Waldemar. "The discordant singing of the country people is quite enough to drive away every one that has an ear for music."

"Do you go to church, then, in town?" she asked.

"Ah no—but seldom," replied he, a little disconcerted; but immediately he went on in a firmer tone, "Honestly, it is not to my taste. When I hear a sermon, I so rarely meet with anything new; it is everlastingly the same, and the most of it each one might discover for himself."

"Indeed?" inquired Ida in surprise; "then I at least should find it difficult enough to discover for myself all the instructive and elevating matter which a sermon from Uncle Kortsén contains."

"Are you so large-minded, Ida, that I can tell you my sentiments plainly? Your uncle is a fine genial man, but I can scarcely imagine him in the pulpit. He is as merry a priest as ever wore black gown—so, now you will be fairly angry!"

"Not exactly angry," answered Ida gravely, "though it cannot but grieve me to hear you speak so. This is, however, not the first time that I have noticed that you do not like ministers."

"Well, let them not be the subject of dispute; it is not that which keeps me from the church. I must honestly confess, Ida, that I cannot conceive how it is possible for any one to maintain the spirit of devotion during the long ceremony which you call God's worship. There is no one who really does it."

"In that I *do* hope you are mistaken," said Ida in earnest accents.

"Is not the psalm-singing quite a pain to you?"

"That is surely not the worst stumbling-block to devotion."

"What, then? I am very curious to know what can distract my pious Ida's devotion."

"Had we not better talk of something else? The manner in which you treat such a solemn subject distresses me."

"Now, make your shrift to me! Do you know what I should like? That we were Romon Catholics, and I a monk, then you would at once confess all! But though a Protestant, you have more confidence in every priest you meet than in your friend Waldemar Krone, because, I suppose, he is not a church-goer."

"What do you specially wish to know, then?" asked Ida, looking at him with rather an anxious glance.

"What is it that really *does* distract your church devotions?" returned he with a smile.

"My own thoughts," said Ida, after a moment's consideration, and with less confusion than he had expected.

"And what are these thoughts about?"

"Vanities—the vanities of this world."

"Does that mean that, for instance, you are vain of the pretty white hat you have on, and which unquestionably becomes you most bewitchingly?"

Ida was a little disconcerted by the glance with which Waldemar accompanied these words. He was naturally of all persons the one in whose vicinity she had most difficulty in preserving her equanimity; yet to-day she was doubly armed, first by the serious considerations which Aunt Lene's remarks had awakened in her mind, and next by the devout feelings she always cherished when going to church, and which not even the appearance of Waldemar could wholly drive away. She blushed indeed at his question, but answered with steady voice:

"No, Waldemar, thank Heaven I am not such a child as that."

"What is then to be understood by it?"

Ida began to feel that she had ventured out on the

ice by entering upon an explanation. It was not exactly the common idle thoughts disturbing her devotion, the confession of which annoyed her so much, though she felt that it was most fitting that she should keep even these to herself. That her thoughts during the commencement of God's worship fluttered about a little; that she noticed who came into the church, and how the women and girls were dressed; that she read the inscription on the late Chamberlain Resen's epitaph, and questioned within herself if it were true that he had been so noble a spouse and citizen as the golden characters set forth; that she had even been tormented with so foolish a fancy as that, on seeing Uncle Kortsen walk up to the altar, she recalled what Aunt Lise had said the day before, when she took out his pastor's ruff to see if it was clean, and bade him be sure it did not come away, as in his hurry had once happened,—no, Ida felt that neither the peasants' costume, nor Herr Resen's epitaph, nor Uncle Peer's ruff, would this day distract her devotion; it was something entirely different that had latterly stolen in between her and her God!

For the first time it came clearly before her, that what she had sucked in as it were with her mother's milk, and what from her tenderest years her parents had instilled into her, had never taken root in Waldemar's heart. He was quite destitute of religious principle. Want of sympathy in this point seldom proves a stumbling-block to the love of young people, and Ida's affection was not thereby lessened; perhaps it took but the more wistful and intense hold on that account. She had also perceived that many people viewed the matter in the same way as Waldemar Krone; but in spite of her love for him, and notwithstanding her youth, the question had more significance in her estimation than it has with most people. It was clear that Waldemar wished to have a little amusement from the conversation, and that at all events he was not disposed to learn to be devout. This was a painful feeling to her, and, casting down her eyes before his roguish glance, she replied:

"I am sorry I cannot answer you on this. I cannot, even to humor you, jest with a subject so sacred. It is not easy to be devout, but it is possible. I succeed in this sometimes very well, and I should feel truly unhappy if I could not."

This answer doubtless appeared to Waldemar very absurd, for he went on with a troubled countenance, and in deep silence. When they were at the church he stopped, and said, in a cordial, coaxing tone:

"You have come too early, Ida; neither minister nor clerk is here; come with me a little way over to the wood."

"There I see uncle coming, and the clerk with him, so it is best that I should wait."

"You can at any rate, then, come with me as far as the meadow; come now, and let us talk about—about other things."

"No, dear friend," replied Ida, kindly but yet in a firm tone, "it cannot be."

"Do you not care to take a walk with me?"

"Can you think so? But I won't do it just at the moment I should go to church."

"Farewell, then!" said Waldemar curtly, and thereupon he set off briskly toward Tiornholm.

Ida remained a moment standing, and looked after him; she had never loved him more deeply than at the instant he quitted her so abruptly. Oh how much she would have wished to beg him to stay and go with her to church! But she feared that such an invitation would be quite misinterpreted, and bashfulness tied her tongue. She went into church grieved, and never before had she found such difficulty in collecting her thoughts. The pastor's discourse was earnest and impressive; he was one of those happily-gifted clergymen who, having carefully meditated on the subject at home, can speak freely in the pulpit on the inspiration of the moment. Few did this so well as he, so that his preaching was in truth a living word, and his church was never empty. His warm feeling, his lively fancy, his keen perception

of the affairs of life, all became subject in the church to his serious apprehension of spiritual things, and his fervent zeal; here all his faculties served the Master he followed, showing at once a simple childlike trust and a man's tried fidelity.

He spoke of Jesus as He came down from seclusion on the mountain, when He cleansed the leper and healed the centurion's servant; then, after some short observations on the miracles themselves, he impressively drew his congregation to see in this narrative not only the emblematical, but a real supernatural occurrence, in which the Lord of nature had manifested his divine power. He went on next to speak of spiritual leprosy, and among the pictures which he here drew with striking truth was one which entirely suited Waldemar Krone, as it did each of the youthful and unconcerned who pursue life with the presumption of mere worldly impulse. The disease was one, he said, prone to seize upon the being who lives without God in the world, and who unconsciously but increasingly grows susceptible of the loathsome contagion referred to; a malady by no means implying at all times the presence of vice, either open or hidden; but rather a spiritual ailment—an utter insensibility to those gospel truths which others can still feel; a callousness to the heavenly touch; a spreading estrangement from all that unites mankind in hope and love, till even the world observes the repulsive change. How difficult the healing of such a disease, the mastering of an evil which often a whole life of self-reliance has confirmed! What a piteous thought, that such a man, despite all his inward qualities, must one day stand naked and exposed before God's throne, there to hear the doom of final exclusion,—of necessary banishment from among the pure dwellings and bright societies of life above! It might be an austere conclusion, but it was one that could not be withheld, since Scripture teaches nothing else than the unconditional perfect surrender of ourselves and ours to the will and service of God.

On the other hand, the preacher enforced on all believers—those who professed and meant to be Christians—the character of purity which rested on them, and how shamefully they trifled with their Lord and Saviour if their lives did not correspond with their appearance; for what profits it that the outer man be clean and healthful, if the works be not salutary? With such ultimately it would be even as the Lord had said: “Their last state shall be worse than the first.”

It was this day impossible to Ida to be devout. She only heard fragments of the pastor’s solemn and impressive discourse; she constantly sank back into reveries. Waldemar Krone’s voice ever and anon sounded in her ears, and his warm glance rested on her. She acted over in fancy the scene she had just passed through,—again she met him, was gladdened by the sight, was distressed by his words, and parted from him with pain and an ominous anxiety at the entrance of God’s house.

Ida’s dark presentiments of evil had more foundation than she could know; what would she have felt if she had been aware that Waldemar’s gayety that morning was a mask, that his thoughts lingered by her during the whole of his ride, that he felt deeply moved on seeing her so unexpectedly, and that perhaps he might have come to an explicit declaration of his sentiments, if she had only yielded to his wish, and accompanied him on the road to Tiornholm? But all this that had been said between them about devotion and church-going fell like hoar-frost on the flower, and his heart closed again. He was repelled by her refusal to give up to him a few moments, and that too for what he considered as a whim. Now, since he could view it thus, it was certainly best that Providence at this hour led them apart from each other.

This was the deepest shadow which the clouds of adversity had yet cast upon Ida’s path, though hitherto it was invisible to herself. The cloud came unmarked, nearer and nearer, till it hung over her head and threatened to hurl forth the mortal lightning.

Countess Fransiska had at last become observant of Krone's frequent visits to Bonderup, although they were always taken indirectly, either from Dyrlund or on the road to Tiørnholm. She next learnt that the Miss Stainforth, who was on a visit to Pastor Kortsen, was Waldemar Krone's foster-sister, and she heard the rumor of her beauty. Ida's personal appearance now first received any importance in her eyes; for the young lady might have lived at Bonderup all her life without coming in closer contact with Fransiska Gyldenholdt, had Waldemar Krone not taken notice of her.

As some sportive inquiries, which quite took our hero by surprise, had sufficiently enlightened the countess with regard to the state of matters, she entirely changed her behavior toward him. Far from letting him see any displeasure or jealousy, she treated him with cordiality, sought by every means to chain him to Gyldenholdt, watched his steps, and thus gradually drew him more and more into the net.

This little affair with the captain's pretty daughter was not at bottom such an unpleasant surprise to the countess, for she did not doubt that victory would be easy for her; the matter set her talent for intrigue in action a little, and gave back to her daily life some of that excitement which had long been wanting in it. Her real character thus came more and more to light, and gradually developed itself for the worse, as she proceeded on the crooked path into which caprice and feminine weakness impelled her; but Waldemar Krone saw not the shady side, dazzled by the radiance which her attractive person and cultivated mind could so well diffuse. Her seeming preference now unfolded its witchery for him in far more lavish fashion, and the effect was all the stronger because her former haughty and satiric manner had not indulged him in this respect, whatever possibility had at occasional moments been shown him, that she might at some time bend her capricious heart to his.

By the manner in which she now, to speak plainly,

attached herself to him, the young man's half-recovered reason was once more set reeling on its seat. Not merely did it gradually become to him very difficult to get to Bonderup, nay, even to Dyrland, because the countess always had some proposal or other ready for agreeable excursions, when the old count did not require his company at the chase, or his time was not demanded by the animated negotiations with Sass, to which they gave the name of business; but there was in his own heart the most powerful advocacy, passion itself aside, to enforce her fascinations. It lay not merely in the attractions of her person and the amusement afforded by her society, but also in the ambitious dreams which his uncle had left him as an heirloom, and which he fancied himself in a manner bound to realize. Moreover, if not from money alone, yet from the luster and power with which wealth endows a man, and the favor which the world shows to the great, a deep temptation resided for him; and vanity helped not least to deafen the secret voice, which in the still hours whispered to him that he had given occasion to greater expectations on Ida's part, than it was allowable to disappoint.

His position had in truth become difficult; for had he not already, in Copenhagen, as much as declared his affection for the countess? And would it not have been a glaring breach if he drew back? This required a mode of conduct which seemed to him too coarse and ungrateful toward a family which had shown him so much kindness and hospitality; and as to the purchase of Tiornholm, shortly to be completed, which had been commenced under the auspices of Sass, it had lately received more direct attention on the part of the old count, thus knitting him to Gyldenholdt with a fresh bond. It was a net made of strong cords in which he was ensnared, nor had he strength to break through; but of course, at the moment when he could institute such reflections the sentence had already passed, the sentence on the destiny of sweet, faithful Ida. And now came the demons to his aid, and reminded him among other things

of the meeting on the way to church, where she expressed herself so narrowly on a point on which the countess never touched but with liberal indifference or easy satire. Alas, however pretty and good Ida might be, she was not suited to him; she was manifestly not formed to accompany him on the brilliant course he hoped to run.

Ida was fated to receive a somewhat evident token that the sentence was indeed passed. She was invited to Dyrland one evening in the month of March, and as it was expressly added that Count Wilhelm was at Gyldenholdt, and that the ladies were alone, she resolved to accompany her uncle and aunts thither. Countess Adelaide had, of course, soon remarked the coolness which ensued between Ida and Waldemar; and as he shortly after also withdrew his visits from Dyrland, she no longer doubted that this was Fransiska's work. With sorrow she beheld how the roses of health and happiness began to fade again from Ida's cheek, and how a still deeper sadness clouded her fair brow than at the period of their first acquaintance. She did her best to enliven and cheer her friend, who did not in an observable manner draw back, though the social meetings had lost their charm for her. Waldemar had only seen her once since their meeting by the church, and then they had but spoken some passing and indifferent words together; but Ida had now become better informed about his relation at Gyldenholdt, and she felt at once a dread, and at the same time an inexplicable curiosity, to see the woman who had so completely succeeded in effacing her own image from the heart of Waldemar.

An inward pain moved constantly in Ida's heart, and she wept bitter tears in secret, but she showed those around her a tranquil brow. It required, indeed, no small force of mind to preserve this outward calm. An occasional sharp remark about some trifling matter, which was before unusual to her; a curt answer to Aunt Lene, who was well content with Waldemar Krone's withdrawal, and made an attempt to sound Ida's feel-

ings on the subject,—such were the only tokens of what she suffered.

Ida went thus to Dyrland, but to her surprise she met both Count Wilhelm and Waldemar there. The count was not satisfied that Krone of late so seldom visited him, and he had this time pressed him so warmly that he found it impossible to say no; the countess also placed no obstacle in the way. As a hunting party was fixed at Gyldenholdt for next day, which Count Wilhelm first learnt on the spot, the visit had to be made immediately; he therefore proposed that Waldemar should spend the night at Dyrland, and next morning drive with him at once to the head-ranger's house, where the chase was to begin, and which lay nearer to Dyrland. Thus they came to Dyrland quite unexpected, on the forenoon of the same day that the guests from Bonderup were to come in the evening. This unlooked-for return of the gentlemen was no agreeable surprise to Countess Adelaide, who had observed that Ida avoided meeting Krone, and she had just on that account chosen this evening for her invitation to the pastor's family circle.

Countess Fransiska had bid the young men a gay farewell, and no one would have suspected from her manner the quiet determination to execute a little manœuvre from which she suspected some amusement, and which also promised to satisfy her curiosity in a certain respect. The old baroness, on account of her delicate health, scarcely ever left her apartments, especially in winter; she was, however, always anxious to hear news, and she also cherished more sympathy with the inhabitants of the district than either her brother or her niece. Count Wilhelm thus seldom escaped her cross-examination, and this morning had been duly catechised. Among other things, he spoke a little about Pastor Kortsen's family, and that they were expected over in the evening to Dyrland. Count Wilhelm gave this last piece of information with a little sigh; for though he had long since seen the entire hopelessness of winning Ida Stainforth, and even after Krone had withdrawn, his renewed at-

tempt was a more signal failure than the first, still he could not so easily banish her from his thoughts.

The countess was present when Count Wilhelm mentioned the expected party to Aunt Louise, and she hence conceived an idea, which she executed in the following manner. In the afternoon, when the young gentlemen had gone, she went into her father's room, where he was smoking a cigar in solitary dignity, and said to him in an insinuating manner:

"I have lately thought how odd it seems that I have not visited Aunt Josephine for so long; what do you say if we two drive over there this evening? It would be good sport, too, to surprise Krone and Wilhelm, who don't in the least expect to see us there."

The count was much pleased to find his daughter disposed to take a step toward meeting her relatives at Dyrland; it had always vexed him that she was not on more cordial terms with them, but after a few slight efforts, he had let the matter go its own way, feeling as he did a general disinclination to mix in other people's affairs, and a special one toward women's quarrels. He, therefore, entered very willingly into his daughter's proposal; no objection was made on his part to her desire, which she assigned to the coldness of the weather, to drive in the large landau instead of the little spring-cart which the count always used in preference. The four splendid glossy brown horses were harnessed, and in great state, with a servant in attendance, the count and his daughter drove in the lovely winter moonlight to Dyrland.

The little company there had meanwhile adjusted itself as well as it could after the first embarrassment occasioned by the meeting of Waldemar and Ida had been got over. It was with evident reluctance that Madame Kortsen returned Waldemar's salutation; even the genial pastor was a little disconcerted, and received his excuses for not having accepted his last invitation, and for not having been there since, in a manner that said plainly enough, "Let us have done with this as quickly as possible, my young friend, and for God's sake

tell no more untruths than are absolutely necessary to conceal the unpleasant state of matters."

For Ida's part, after a conflict which, though apparently slight, was really very great, she won the mastery over her disquieted heart, and maintained a long *tête-à-tête* with Countess Adelaide. But this had at last to reach its close, and as a general conversation ensued, she noticed that Waldemar's manner was by no means so calm and cold as she had expected. He made a desperately unsuccessful attempt to speak to her in the old brotherly manner, next he became querulous and short-tempered, and thence floundered over into a tone of gayety somewhat forced. How this relative position of the company would have developed itself in the course of the evening remains an unsolved problem; for suddenly a distinct sound was heard of horses' hoofs and carriage-wheels, which the frozen earth made louder, till all the dogs, both fast and loose, began to bark, and echoes repeated the noise. All went to the window, where they saw a large and elegant carriage, with four horses, whose crests gleamed in the moonlight as it drew up at the door, and thereupon heard Count Wilhelm exclaim, as he ran out into the hall:

"'Pon my soul, it is uncle and Fransiska!"

To him the visit was a most welcome surprise, for the stately reserve on his cousin's side had vexed him on account of his mother and sister. The countess was also pleased at being the object of their attention, but Countess Adelaide heard the announcement with decided displeasure. Ida was seized by a vague feeling of uneasiness, as if some misfortune awaited her; Aunt Lene's countenance became as sharp and severe as if some personal insult were offered her; while Uncle Peer took the largest pinch that had ever come out of his old tortoiseshell snuff-box. Yet all this was nothing to the feeling of pain that pressed upon Waldemar's breast; Ida's eyes watched his countenance; she saw that he became deadly pale, and then, at the moment when the countess appeared at the door, grew crimson; he made a step for-

ward as if to meet her, but stopped and allowed Countess Adelaide and her mother to pass.

The brilliant countess was dressed in ruby silk, the color of which, deep yet fresh, heightened in the most charming manner the delicacy of her complexion; her beautiful hair was arranged in the most tasteful style, but she wore only one single ornament, a large and very costly brooch, a gift from her father. Her toilet was made with all the more evident care, as it betrayed a certain attempt at simplicity which in her was curious if not rather unsuitable.

She came into the room with accustomed ease and gracefulness, greeting her aunt and cousin as if there had never been any coolness between them. The pastor made his reverence; Waldemar got in passing a confidential nod, accompanied by a smile; and while the old count deliberately moved into due position, she allowed her aunt to lead her forward to the ladies from Bonderup.

It vexed good Aunt Lene afterward that she allowed herself to be so entirely disconcerted by the countess's polite greeting and cordial address. One would have thought that she would not have cherished any ill will against the lady who wished to deliver her darling Ida from the misfortune of becoming Waldemar Krone's wife! But not the less she felt great wrath at sight of her; must there not have been in good Aunt Lene's heart, consequently, more good will toward Waldemar than she would herself acknowledge? Must she not have wished that he had been placed rather lower in the social scale, and surrounded by fewer temptations, so that a union with Ida might not have had so many obstacles? And was she not in wrath, because of these temptations, seeing that the most dangerous of them all, in the person of the countess, had stepped so uncereemoniously into her presence? But whatever her feelings were, it is still certain that at the moment when the countess, with her blandest smile, held out her hand and said a few complaisant words to her, Aunt Lene's gruff

manner changed in a sudden, and therefore somewhat comic fashion, to smiles and courtesy.

The introduction of the pastor's wife offered nothing remarkable, and thereafter the countess turned to Ida as if she now observed her for the first time; and yet she had immediately, even while still but on the threshold, sought and with her sharp eye found the person for whose sake alone she had come.

Every lady who has a generally acknowledged reputation for beauty, and is susceptible to the world's favor, cherishes a natural jealousy toward those who may cause her rank to be disputed. There was a little of this in the curiosity the countess felt to see Ida Stainforth, whose fame had gradually reached her from many quarters. She had, moreover, so much faith in Waldemar Krone's taste that she did not believe he would be attracted by anything common. She wished now by this unlooked-for visit to have the testimony of her own eyes, and next to give her youthful lover a slight lesson by making him feel at the same time that another relapse would not be tolerated. It annoyed her most assuredly that, when at last she had cast her eyes on one whom, in some measure, she considered worthy of being her husband, he could then turn from her, however partially, to any other woman. It was therefore a satisfaction to her, by this surprise, to punish him a little, and to let him see, at the same time, what a distance there was between a lady of the great world and a girl from some little provincial town.

The first view of Ida had astonished her, and she now observed her with some interest, to see if this first impression was strengthened by closer scrutiny.

Ida had striven to regain her composure, but had not quite succeeded; for the countess seemed to her so truly handsome, the grace and ease with which she moved from one to another, the friendly and fitting manner in which she addressed each individual, all appeared to her so far above what she herself was capable of, that in her modesty she undervalued her own advant-

ages. She thought that now it was quite plain that she did well in stepping back into the shade before so overwhelming a rival. Such feelings did indeed pass off, but such was the first impression; she felt herself overpowered and confused, her color to some degree betrayed the embarrassment, still, as the countess spoke to her, a native energy came to her aid, she regained self-control at the instant, her fine countenance recovered the fresh tint of which care had deprived it, and which made her then as beautiful as she had been in her happiest days.

Over the countess's features, on the other hand, spread a gray cloud, which with her was a sign of the deepest displeasure; what she saw so far surpassed her expectation, and her practiced eye was so sharpened by envy to apprehend at once the rare and innocent charm which surrounded Ida, that her condescending address was a failure, and her conversation came to a close much sooner than she had proposed.

But she soon mastered her emotion. All were seated, and the conversation proceeded. At first it was rather constrained, but the brilliant intruder gradually became more animated, and displayed her talent for being entertaining; it was, indeed, with no little tact that she adapted herself to the circle into which she had so unexpectedly broken. Ida remained quite silent, though, with the attention due from her youth and usage to the house, she was always the first to rise for such services as were requisite, or go out of the room when anything was wanted; and if apparently liable to the charge of being somewhat long in bringing what she went for, the Countess Adelaide shared the imputation, as the latter assisted her in these homely good offices of the country. Once or twice, indeed, the girl did join in the conversation, when drawn into it, rather anxiously, by Waldemar Krone; her remarks were then perfectly self-possessed, contrasting, indeed, favorably with his in that respect. They were all unaffectedly brief, but expressive of full intelligence, and came forth just as simply and naturally as at other times.

The countess at last became weary of talking among the rest, and under cover of their discourse began a more private dialogue with Waldemar, which she introduced by one or two remarks on Ida Stainforth. To wit, she apologized to him for the fancy sketch which she had originally drawn in Frederiksberg Avenue of the captain's daughter. She admitted that his foster-sister was a charming girl, and that she deserved to be painted; but added that no doubt she lacked the *tour-nure*, which only life in the great world can give; though this want assuredly was not felt by the pretty girl herself. It was true, this might also be an article of luxury in the unpretending circle where she was born, and to which she naturally belonged. After the countess had thus quite blandly set Ida in the place that belonged to her, and let Waldemar feel how much higher she herself stood, and that he should rather contemplate his foster-sister from some higher stand-point,—not look up to her, but down on her,—she took him entirely by himself into the recess of the window, and chained him there by a conversation to which she gave a warmer cast, and from which she discarded all satire. She saw that there was now constantly a cloud on her handsome young friend's brow, and she feared that possibly in his relations with the "little Stainforth" he had gone further than was desirable. Therefore she treated him very considerately, gave him tenderer words and gestures, and during these attempts to win him back really involved her own sentiments in the process.

Waldemar was at first chary of his words; without having any clear perception of his position, or seeing his conduct completely in the light it deserved, he was yet tormented by a lively uneasiness and discontent with himself. It seemed to him that he read reproaches in Ida's glance, and displeasure in Madame Kortsen's, that the pastor kept him at arm's-length by formal politeness, and that even Countess Adelaide treated him with coldness. This annoyed him, and at last he gave himself up entirely to her whose beaming eyes rested coax-

ingly upon him, from whose lips issued words only friendly and encouraging; such, too, as were at the same time quite suited to drive away the scruples which tortured him. He felt keenly the gentle and delicate manner in which the countess sought to cheer him, and the indulgence with which she treated his ill humor. It thus dawned more and more upon his conscience that by drawing back from the countess he had committed an injustice toward her, and a mistake with regard to himself; and in this opinion he felt himself strengthened on regarding the tranquillity which Ida seemed to possess. Thus he interpreted what was, in great measure, but a nervous exhaustion after the violent pain that had shaken her inmost being. With her the suffering was all kept within; she did not often relieve herself by vehement outbursts, and so the emotions of her mind were less observable by those around, but felt with double keenness by herself.

The countess, though so much occupied with Waldemar, followed Ida with her eyes the whole evening; she saw that her rival was pretty when she sat still, and that when she walked every movement was graceful; that it equally became her to speak, or to smile silently, till at last a glance from those bright eyes became so painful to her that she avoided meeting them with her own. In her most secret mind she resolved that, with her good will, Waldemar Krone should never again encounter Ida Stainforth.

The memorable evening, unpleasant to most of the company, and to Ida most painful, came at length to an end; and it now appeared that Krone purposed driving back with the old count and his daughter to Gyldenholdt. He had all the better ground for this in the fact that Sass had asked for him during dinner at the castle; it was clear the bailiff must have something of importance to speak to him about next morning, before they went to the hunt.

The countess played her part consistently to the last, and took friendly leave of all; but she was a little dis-

concerted by the cold manner in which her cousin Adelaide bade her farewell. Adelaide had pretty well penetrated the design of her brilliant cousin, and several times in the course of the evening fixed her intelligent eyes on her with an expression by no means pleasant to its recipient. It had not escaped Countess Adelaide's observation, that in spite of all friendliness and apparent interest, Cousin Fransiska had not uttered a single word showing that the approach to intimacy on her side was seriously meant. No invitation for a speedy return-visit to Gyldeholdt was given, though more than one fitting occasion was offered on the part of Adelaide's mother; all such advances being evaded with a dexterity that was characteristic. Neither did Fransiska give any token of a wish to continue the acquaintance of Pastor Kortsen's family; and it was therefore evident to Countess Adelaide that she had come entirely for her own sake and in her own interests.

Uncle Arthur, on the other hand, clapped Adelaide kindly on the shoulder, and said, "Let me see now, my girl, that you come over our way very soon!" But while she thanked him for the invitation, she was angry in her own mind at the thought that her generous uncle, who the whole evening had been most gracious to everybody, and truly cordial to his relations, should thus be treated as if what he said had no importance, and he himself were only a puppet in selfish hands.

Waldemar bade farewell to Ida in a peculiarly hurried manner, and she followed him out of the room with her eyes, as if she were looking at him for the last time. When she had got home, and had laid her weary head upon the pillow, she lightened her heavy heart by a flood of tears, and earnestly prayed God to give her strength to walk in this thorny path, which it seemed that He in His inscrutable wisdom had appointed for her on the way to the great goal of life.

CHAPTER XI.

DREAMS.

MOST men have in their youth passed through seasons over which prevail the indistinctness and confusion of a dream,—seasons in which the soul, though resisting, seems to be drawn onward by a power alien from the will. We have indeed all dreamt something of the kind when we were young, and too heedless to perceive the kind act of Providence in cutting the thread and awaking us.

Thus it happens too with actual dreams—the life we live when asleep. We wish somewhere to accomplish something, to reach some goal or other, but the strangest obstacles stand in the way, and the desire remains unattained, till we awaken, and with pleasure feel that this feverish existence was only a dream, a picture effaced by the breath upon the slate, a furrow closing in the waters, leaving no trace behind.

But Providence tries that man severely whose youthful dreams are perfectly fulfilled, who awakes to see that it is no longer a dream, but the most palpable reality. Wherefore does it sometimes happen that the successful man is seized with anxiety; and wherefore is it so often the case with the success so eagerly craved, and at last attained, that like the gold which, according to the old traditions, fairies and trolls gave to mortal men, it burns their hands through and disappears?

How many have dreamed Waldemar Krone's dream about the highest earthly happiness, but how few have been favored like him! Much was already given; for his youth, his handsome looks, his health, his gift of winning hearts, along with his abundant means, placed him high among the favorites of fortune; but what a

future would open before him, when the fairest and richest bride, the object of fruitless aspirations to so many, became his own,—a future which promised him the gratification of every desire, if it was merely his aim to enjoy life, but which, moreover, if his aim were higher, might lead him further on than most others! He only required to put forth his hand and grasp it, and yet he lingered; it was merely to speak the word, yet he remained silent. In the midst of all this grandeur he was at times seized by an unaccountable vacuity, and so, near the attainment of his wishes, he was struck with alarm. For he had been some moments awakened to self-examination, though not reaching the clear vision of the fully aroused. A quiet but radiant star had shone benign across his path; and though he had turned his face away from it, yet its image still constantly hung before his eyes. Just at this time, when he no longer beheld Ida, his thoughts dwelt most upon her; he could not forget her, and therefore he lingered, and continued to dream as long as it was possible.

Was it not like a dream when he rode by Fransiska's side through the wide-stretching woods of Gyldenholdt? As she sat there on that spirited pony, in the riding-habit that so well became her, while her rich brown eyes glanced on him, and the ostrich feather waving from her hat was blown at times to her bright cheek, as if to kiss it, then truly she bewitched him, and he could not turn his eyes away from her. The well-tuned accents of her clear voice, the silvery ringing of her laugh, sounded musical to his ear; her sportive humor carried him along with her; yet, when her beautiful features assumed the haughty satirical expression which was peculiar to them; when with a few airy words she threw a ridiculous light over neighbors and acquaintances,—not one of her own people, even her father, entirely escaping,—then his mind misgave him as the question arose, whether she could view him thus also, or mean honestly by him? But she had always a softening observation ready, and Waldemar admitted that the fault lay with himself; she

was perhaps right when she blamed him for being too sensitive, and taking everything so seriously and solemnly.

She never alluded to that evening at Dyrland, or to the inhabitants of Bonderup parsonage, and she did not once name Ida Stainforth's name; it seemed as if she had doomed the little provincial girl to death and oblivion. This consistent silence did honor to her prudence, for any attack on Ida would have roused Waldemar's sympathy with the latter, and stirred him up to defend her.

Was it not also like a dream when the chase began, and Waldemar joined in it as eagerly as if he had been born and bred at Gyldenholdt? How fine when the signal-horns sounded on the heights, and the bush-beaters advanced to drive the game down into the valley where the sportsmen were posted! At length the bushes rustled nearer hand, and the wild doe, with the fawn and buck in her train, broke forth, whole troops of fleet hares were forced into view, the hares coming first as the advanced guard, and reynard sneaking last when he could hide himself no longer. Report after report was heard along the range, and echo repeated them many times with an exciting din till the close, when the spoil was merrily gathered.

When on these occasions they came home in the evening, the game was laid down in three rows before the great stone staircase of the castle, and the young countess came out to view it. There was a scraping and bowing on her appearance among the Jutland Nimrods, but the main reward of her salute was for Waldemar, and she had always a flattering word for the progress of his skill as a sportsman. Her remarks had often, in spite of their brevity, a special weight in this respect. Thus, once when an eagle had been shot at the battue, the countess asked who had been so fortunate as to bring down the king of birds; and when it was answered that it was Krone, she observed, with a confident smile, "I guessed so!"

But in fine, did it not all transcend the texture of a

dream, rising to the most glorious fulfillment of vision, when he sat with Fransiska in the library, where the shade of the French marquis never again intruded? or in a window-recess in the parlor of the castle, from which he had a view of the magnificent park, while he listened to her half-whispered talk? Who could be so entertaining as she—still more by far, how tenderly and soothingly could she speak to him when marking that his brow was ruffled and his humor fretful! How strange that it was now she who sought after, encouraged, almost wooed him!

And then came the great hunting-ball, which the countess persuaded her father to give, though quite contrary to usage, and at which the castle unfolded all its solid magnificence. It set the whole country-side in commotion, and awakened a great sensation in the three nearest market-towns, of which one, from its garrison, furnished some excellent dancers. Neither were there wanting counts and barons, and among these there were one or two not on the lowest scale; but the countess left it chiefly to her father to do the honors to them. It would have been difficult to imagine a more captivating form and face than Countess Fransiska's when in ball-costume—a costume so long neglected by her; and not many women, on this occasion assuredly not one, could compare with her for courtly grace and elegance in dancing. There was something intoxicating to his pride in the manner in which she this evening gave Waldemar tokens of her favor; while, at the same time, few indeed would have succeeded in discovering their feelings with so much tact, and yet so plainly. It was not her aim at all to conceal them, for she was one of those energetic, impassioned women, to whom the prejudice of class and of regard to the world are as nothing when deep sentiment has once seized on them. But she does not want to do anything ungracefully; there is not the remotest approach to confusion, awkwardness, or hidden betrayal of preference in the proofs she gave. It was satisfaction enough for her vanity that Waldemar Krone was

the handsomest and noblest figure among all the gentlemen present, in the fullness of his manly prime, with the bloom of youth still apparent; nay more, he could that evening call himself lord of Tiornholm. For though the latter business was not quite settled, yet there could be no doubt that in a short time he would possess this title.

Waldemar was less happy than any person guessed, the Countess Adelaide perhaps being excepted. She was present, and followed with painful interest the occurrences of the evening; but it was an evidence of her noble mode of thinking, that she did not withdraw from Waldemar her good will. There was in her cordiality something melancholy which impressed him; and by her presence he was keenly reminded of what he must now certainly seek to forget. It seemed to him as if Ida's mournful glance rested on him still, and sometimes during the noisy dance-music her last steady farewell sounded in his ears.

He did not inquire for Ida of the Countess Adelaide; he had not courage to mention her name; and what value would such an inquiry have had, since he had undoubtedly had it in his power to go and see Ida if he wished?

Waldemar seemed that evening really to feel the great change which had by degrees taken place in his position at Gyldenholdt. The fresh impress of gay enjoyment of life, which made the first part of his stay so attractive, had disappeared. All the reception of his advances which he had so eagerly coveted was now his portion; but he was forced in return to surrender his independence; he had become a slave, and as such he had three very tyrants over him. The chief of these was of course Countess Fransiska. Her attachment was of a very jealous character, and it excluded him in a perceptible manner from taking interest in all others. The more tender and confidential she became in her relation to him, the less she would suffer from him the smallest neglect whatsoever, and the greater became her demands

on his attention. The consequence was that he now seldom even had leave to visit Dyrland; but yet the countess held him so gently in the chain that he had scarcely marked it. He perceived, however, that Count Wilhelm was deeply offended; their previous friendship, once so warm, was now succeeded by a coolness which Waldemar that evening vainly endeavored to thaw. Count Wilhelm was in very bad humor, partly because all his efforts to approach Ida Stainforth had been in vain, partly because his proposal to invite the family from Bonderup parsonage to the ball had been flatly negatived by Cousin Fransiska.

The second tyrant was the old count. At first he merely showed Waldemar Krone politeness as a guest; afterward he had rather drawn back, as if regretting to have hitherto made so much of him; but by degrees he got to feel his society a necessity, which enlivened his long solitary shooting excursions. The affection of most people is won by sympathy in little things, and Waldemar gained the old count's heart by his interest in the chase, for which he gradually conceived a real passion. But he was now obliged to follow the count like his shadow.

His third, and not least important despot, was old Sass, who zealously busied himself with Waldemar's affairs, and, first by writing, afterward during his visit to Copenhagen on his master's business, used the occasion to remove any obstacles from the path which Chamberlain Blom raised against the purchase of Tiornholm. The old gentleman was more conscientious, and made more difficulties than had been expected; but Sass's personal presence and confidential communications set matters clear, and he at the same time suggested how to make the whole capital disposable, for Mrs. Resen desired to have the purchase-money paid at rather short periods, and she had patiently awaited the arrangement of the purchaser's affairs in regard to his minority, just because she knew that he would be able to pay down ready money. While Bailiff Sass now labored in Waldemar's interest, and showed him many important serv-

ices, he kept up the appearance of deference to his views; but despite all courtesy, he entirely managed affairs, and Waldemar felt his subordination very keenly. He perceived, however, that for a time he must give in to this, as he had of his own accord turned to Sass and begged his assistance. Sass had that day at noon returned from town with Chamberlain Blom's power-of-attorney in his pocket, and next day the contract of purchase was to be subscribed at Tiornholm. It is certain, moreover, that Sass, after he had got Waldemar Krone's affairs into his hands, did his best to awaken the Lehnsgrave's interest in his *protégé*, and his influence caused the former to hear the daily praises of young Krone from all sides. If we have likened this period of our hero's youth to a dream, we must add that Sass played the part of awakener, and sometimes palpably reminded him that the time for dreaming was near a close.

Thus, why did Sass give him such a hearty slap on the back as he that night greeted him in the ball-room, informing him of the happy issue of the journey to the capital? Was it not evident by his manner that he thought,—“Now I have done my part; my faith, do the rest now yourself?” Why did all the Lehnsgrave's servants and attendants show in their behavior a respect and a zeal in obeying his wishes which far surpassed the demands he could make as a visitor? Why did Dr. Goldschmidt on every occasion show him attention and overwhelm him with the choicest compliments? A slight cold from which Waldemar suffered for a day or two was treated by the worthy physician as a serious attack, and he admonished him to take care of himself as if it had been the count in person. Why, too, did the doctor now give those little dainty breakfasts, which he managed to arrange so charmingly in his home, though a bachelor? They were obviously and alone given in honor of Mr. von Krone, and his health was drunk in a very significant manner. On what ground must the good man have supposed, that when Mr. von Krone became the possessor of Tiornholm, he would build a castle which should

surpass everything that the district had to show for many miles around? The doctor offered his assistance, and accordingly exhibited his fine collection of architectural designs, while Waldemar, for his part, went into the suggested plans with great interest.

There must have been a reason, too, for the fact that the old count in his conduct toward him showed a vacillation otherwise unusual. There was an alternation of confidential intimacy and embarrassed reserve, which implied that the old nobleman's eyes were opened, and that a strife was going on in his mind, the result of which appeared doubtful to all but his own daughter.

The reply to all these questions might be read in Countess Fransiska's eyes. There was a marvelous fascination in that glance, and there were moments when Waldemar had not courage to meet it. There was something unfathomable and deep in it which confused him; never had any woman looked at him as she did, and he felt as if she read his heart and guessed his most secret thoughts. It fascinated him, but it frightened him too; for there burned in it a fire which was very different from the mild, pure warmth which had so often beamed on him from the eyes of Ida.

What many supposed had already taken place, and what the rest expected would take place, happened accordingly.

Let us linger a moment in the ball-room. The dancing is almost over, and the regimental musician plays the last waltz with the effect which it is desirable to give to a finale. The gay visitors dance as if they had only now rightly begun; loud regrets are heard that this is the last waltz; for such a numerous assembly, such spacious and elegant apartments, such splendid lighting up, such choice entertainment, and, lastly, such glorious music, certainly constituted altogether something not often within the reach of the dwellers in the provinces. The interest was the greater, because Von Gyldenholdt during several years had closed his doors to the world, and given way to a sort of monastic solitude, which was

broken only by the hunting season. It was therefore a common opinion that this ball was the signal for a change, and it awoke hopes of a livelier sociality in the whole district, to see that the countess—for thus Fransiska Gyldenholdt was designated *par excellence*—showed a desire to take notice of her neighbors. This happy change was naturally taken in connection with the reports of her position in regard to young Krone. It was said that he had bought Tiornholm, and it did not require any large amount of fancy to establish the young couple on this handsome estate, where report said a costly mansion was to be erected, and a park laid out in grand style. What a glorious resort might Tiornholm then become for intercourse and festivity! After the proof the countess that evening had given, it must be evident that *ennui* could not continue where she was. She was this evening so friendly and charming that many of the visitors in their hearts apologized to her for the accusations they had previously raised against her of haughtiness; she showed herself reserved only toward the two gentlemen of her own rank, who might have presumed to form serious intentions. It almost seemed as if by her conduct at this ball she wished to prepare the world for what was to come, lest it might be too greatly surprised. All were agreed that a handsomer pair than Waldemar Krone and Fransiska Gyldenholdt had never been seen on a floor, and most of the party understood and approved her choice.

It has often been said, that just as the sight is pretty which is offered by a ball-room early in the evening, so is it an ugly picture which the close of the ball affords. It is like a battle-field when the fight is over, in which the ladies, whatever the conquests they may otherwise have made, have yet squandered away a large portion of their beauty, and the whole of the freshness and grace of their toilets. To the mere onlooker it may be so, but not to the pleasurably excited actors. On the contrary, the enjoyment is highest at the last moment; the merry incidents that have occurred in each other's

company, in the magic lighting up, and to the sounds of music, reach their climax; one anticipates only with regret that the dream is about to end at its perfection, and that the prose of ordinary life will again knock at the door.

It would have been, however, a refreshing sight for the most austere misanthrope to contemplate the countess, as she at this moment sat on the little sofa in a corner of the saloon with Waldemar Krone by her side. Her toilet had not suffered much, and the dark-red camellia she wore in her hair had not lost its freshness; she looked, perhaps, rather tired and languishing, but this made her only the more beautiful.

"Well, our little ball is a greater success than we expected," said she to Waldemar after a pause; "don't you think so? How the good Jutlanders enjoy such a swing! But we have had credit by them! The decoration of the ball-room is really not bad; I must really compliment you on the bouquets under the lights along the wall; they produce a truly sparkling effect."

"The idea is nothing compared with that of the great crown of light in the center," said he. "That is a master-piece, and due to *you*, countess."

"Countess?" she repeated, with an arch smile, while a soft light hovered in her eyes; "there was a time when you liked to call me Fransiska—do you no longer think the name pretty?"

"FRANSISKA—not pretty!" he ejaculated, striving however to turn his gaze from the dangerous attraction. "Not beautiful, rather say—not too intoxicating!"

"Yes; have you any cause to feel hurt at me, dear Waldemar? Let me hear what troubles you."

"Nothing; does it seem to you that I have not been gay this evening?"

"I don't exactly know; you have often been silent and thoughtful, and that not merely this evening, but during the whole of last month. What has come between you and us, who yet mean so kindly toward you?"

"You must take me as I am!"

"Well, so I will then! Let me then hear what dark thoughts are hidden under my friend's brown locks? Does Sass plague him too much with documents and legal advice? Are you at last weary of trailing out on the chase with papa? Has the demon of ambition taken up his abode in your heart, and do you soon leave us to shine on a larger scale?"

"Leave this *now*, just when I propose settling here! I shall probably enter on Tiornholm immediately. You must come over with us one of these days and take a look at the place, for you have never been there yet! However, it will scarcely win your approval; it looks like a robber's den."

"A robber's castle? It has certainly been so in the olden days. Will you imitate your predecessors in ancient times, and throne it at Tiornholm in solitary austere majesty? I observed a knitting of your eyebrows just now, which shows very significantly that you meditate some deed of heroism. You can knit your eyebrows in a very strange fashion."

"A deed of heroism; do you think that I wish to plunder Gyldenholdt?"

"You will assuredly not imitate Viking Thorhild at Tiornholm; the bride you bring home hardly risks being carried off by force!"

"That was just one of my thoughts. I am certainly not knightly enough, either by birth or mode of thinking, to win for myself so highly-born a bride, as I presume you mean that I should carry off—against the wishes of parents and relatives."

"Come, Krone," said the countess, suddenly rising; "walk with me once or twice up and down the long corridor; it is cool there, and I think the large laurels and orange-trees so pretty."

They went out, talking as it seemed confidentially together; but thereafter they disappeared into the little boudoir at the end of the corridor, the farthest of the rooms which this evening were in use. How long they

remained there, and what they talked about, is not known; but that Waldemar in deep emotion at last pressed the countess to his breast, and that she threw her white arms around his neck and kissed him is undoubted, for the sacred moment had its profane spectator!

This unthought-of witness was no other than Waldemar's young valet Niels. The latter was this evening in full dress, and his importance increased with his master's success. Sure enough he did not find it necessary to follow all the admonitions to caution and humility which his father had given him; on the contrary, he made himself respected among the servants by a somewhat confident and arrogant demeanor; but he bore his master's caprices with silent patience, ingratiated himself with the countess by his profound deference, and with the count's right-hand man by his officious serviceableness. For example, he had this evening himself admitted Sass from his journey, and so expeditiously furnished him with meat and drink that the attention was appreciated to the full.

Niels was at this moment on a short trip through the corridor to see if there was anything in the antechamber to remove, when he heard talking within; creeping stealthily forward on tiptoe to the door, which stood ajar, he discovered in an instant what was going on there before him. But at this moment Niels showed himself as a worthy son and pupil of Father Hans; he closed the door without sound, went his way quietly, and took up his post at a fitting distance, to prevent his master from being taken by surprise in the business on hand.

There came the old count approaching the vicinity; Niels could hear that it was he, because his lordship's boots always creaked unmistakably to a practiced ear. He set to work to remove some chairs, till the count perceived him, and asked, in his peculiarly slow manner:

"Ha! art busy already, my son? Right, quite right, lad, to set things in order. Hast chanced to see the countess pass?"

Niels replied with the most innocent face, but loudly enough to be heard around, "that her ladyship a minute since had gone into the large drawing-room;" whereupon the count turned in the direction indicated, only mumbling, "'Tis odd,—I came that way."

He soon succeeded in his quest, however; and shortly thereafter the door of the antechamber allowed Niels to disappear without further trouble. On this occasion he kept strictly by Father Hans's third principle, inasmuch as he did not tell any one at Gyldenholdt what he had seen; however, he indemnified himself in the next letter to his father.

CHAPTER XII.

THE HERO BECOMES COMPLETE.

A DAY or two after, Waldemar Krone and Sass sat in the latter's parlor by a comfortable breakfast-table. Though the procurator neither sat nor drove on springs, he denied himself none of the pleasures of the table, and there was always to be found in his cellar a small stock of the best vintage. The Lehnsgreve himself, who once in a year, on Sass's birthday, was his guest, was wont then to express his acknowledgment of the excellence of the wine placed on the board, and thought it must be rather costly; indeed, if his own Burgundy could compare with it that was all. Sass always tranquilized his lord with the assurance that he had not bought it; it was a present from some merchant or other, for whom he had gained a cause, and of course he did not bring it out every day; an explanation which enabled the count to enjoy the wine in a due degree.

A nice set-out of cold meat, some delicacies of the season, a flask of excellent cognac, and two flasks of

the said noble Burgundy, had already for some time occupied the gentlemen agreeably; witness was borne by Waldemar's lively, gay expression, and by two red spots under Sass's eyes, with a slight suffusion of his nose, to the fact that they had used the time well. A great change had evidently passed upon our hero; the quietness, thoughtfulness, and vacillation which had troubled the countess had given place to a firm resolve on her part. Now that the die was cast, and his destiny fixed, he no longer looked back, but hardened his heart against everything that might make him weak; he went zealously into the arrangement of his affairs, and on that point far surpassed Sass's expectation; but he had agreed with Countess Fransiska to keep their engagement secret for a short time.

"Well, my dear Mr. von Krone," exclaimed Sass, raising his glass, "here is to the success of the bargain! You have in truth managed your matters well, but you are lucky in all of them."

"Managed my matters well, Sass? Why, I have done nothing at all—the whole honor of course belongs to you; but, you may believe me, I appreciate it."

"Hm! Well, I have really done my best, and I may admit that I have been of use to you."

"The result has surpassed my most sanguine expectations, Sass; the whole affair is somewhat enigmatical to me."

"The whole affair," answered Sass, closing one eye, "took an unexpected turn; but it was a lucky one for you. You must know that Mrs. Resen had at first given me the sale of Tiornholm in commission, and when you applied to me I was in great perplexity, for the Lehnsgrave knew nothing about my being Mrs. Resen's agent, and therefore recommended your case to me—indeed he did! You must know that he was afraid lest our fine heir-apparent should mislead you into making a bad bargain. We all have our weaknesses, do you see; the old man cannot endure to have it thought that the heir-apparent may be shrewder than himself; but it is cer-

tain that if you now possess Tiornholm, you have in the first place specially to thank Count Wilhelm for it.

"Do you see, honored sir," continued the bailiff, filling their glasses again, "I scarcely know how to join the two things, to be Mrs. Resen's agent and at the same time look after your interests; really, nothing can put a man's probity to a severer test than such a commission. I had however pondered the matter, and thought I had fixed on a price equitable toward both parties, when I suddenly learned that the good lady's brother, the chamberlain, had made me suspicious in her eyes, and induced her to put the whole matter into his hands. At the first moment I was certainly much enraged at this vote of want of confidence, but on closer consideration I perceived that, cleverly used, this circumstance might just exactly serve our purpose. For I was now freed from all obligations toward Mrs. Resen, and the chamberlain is a conceited self-sufficient block-head, who is neither acquainted with matters at Tiornholm, nor indeed understands business in general. He has always been a great speculator, and it is usually easy to take that sort of people by the nose. So I begged you to keep my name quite out of the affair, only mentioning Count Wilhelm as your authority, and to say that when you had your guardian's consent to conclude the bargain, you would, on account of your ignorance on such matters, bring with you a legal adviser to settle details with the chamberlain. Now you may imagine Mrs. Resen's consternation when we came into the room, and it appeared that your adviser was no other than old Sass—ha, ha! The self-same Sass, who knows each stick and inch of ground on the place! Now you comprehend her apologies; but you remember how I soothed her by declaring that I was not in the least affronted, that I considered it so reasonable for her to allow her nearest of kin to watch over her interests. The chamberlain, great ass, began the negotiation in a very threatening style, and let me know that he was neither afraid of me nor of all the attorneys in the

world, but I softened him with compliments and acknowledgments of his shrewdness. A flask of stout port-wine did the rest, and her brother's visit to her was really a pleasure dearly bought to the good woman; for I can tell you that if the matter had remained in my hands alone, Mrs. Resen would now have been ten thousand dalers richer. So much was the price which I had set on the property higher than that to which by courtesy and submission in trifling matters I had squeezed the chamberlain down. See, that is what comes of it when such great gentlemen come over from the capital and fancy they can make a bargain with us Jutlanders—ho, ho, ho!”

“Then I must own, my good Sass,” replied Waldemar gravely, “that if I had known anything about your earlier footing with Mrs. Resen, I would not have received assistance from you.”

“Of course,” answered Sass, smacking his lips after a gulp of wine; “of course I could at once see from your frontispiece, as the saying is, that you would stand in your own light when possible. Don’t misunderstand me—but it is so evidently written on your brow, that you had far rather use your fist than your wits. At your age, and with your upbringing, Mr. von Krone, one gets overstrained notions of honor. Humbug, my dear sir; a bargain is a bargain. We have won a victory in open fight, and if folks cannot see and hear, they must pay—that is the road to wisdom!”

“Well, the matter cannot be altered now, and I must not blame you, who meant so kindly by me. Though I well know, my dear sir, that you have not watched over my interest from any motive of gain——”

“No, on my honor no; faith, nothing of the sort. I have done it from friendship.”

“Was it also written on my brow, Sass, that I believed you could in so short a time form such a friendship for me? Me, an entire stranger, and quite unconnected with you? No, though I believe you have no ill will to me, yet I know very well for whose sake and in whose interests you have worked.”

"Well, devil take it! you are right," broke out the bailiff with a warmth which he immediately checked. "It was doubtless for—Ah, well," corrected he, "how glad I am to hear you say so! For I hope I may thence infer that I have not worked in vain."

"That you may securely infer."

"Really—is it true?—may I congratulate——"

"Stop, my dear Sass, you shall in time know enough; but we are fairly away from the matter. So so—though you have not assisted me in the purchase of Tiornholm for the sake of gain, still I cannot take advice from a professional man for nothing. In other words, what do I owe you for your trouble?"

"Well, well, not so fast! We can settle that at our convenience; besides, it can be no great matter."

"You entirely mistake me; up to this date you have not merely assisted, but entirely managed my affairs. Now, when I enter on the possession of Tiornholm I shall undertake that duty myself; but I don't wish to be ungrateful, and I should very much like to give you solid evidence of my gratitude."

This speech did not altogether please Sass, who put his hand to his chin and nodded; but whatever he felt he concealed it, and said, in an easy tone:

"Ah—give me then—let's see—yes—fifty thalers."

Waldemar took out his pocket-book and laid five hundred daler-notes on the table.

"What! is it really as much as this you mean? Have you not overlooked the odd cipher?" and Sass fidgeted in his chair. "Hm—positively I could not take that! What will the Lehns greve think? No, let us at least divide by five."

"Nay, Sass, the account is rendered," insisted his late client; "your good counsel is really worth more than that: but if you think it too much, you may look on it as an advance; it is possible I may soon come again to you for a bit of advice."

"Really? I thought Sass had got his discharge; though not just on white paper, still in the shape of these little scraps here."

"So Sass has, indeed. To speak plainly, I doubtless wish to manage my own affairs myself, and be master at home. But I have a great respect for Herr Procurator Sass's ability and experience, and it would be very stupid if I did not ask, when necessary, for counsel where it is given with such good will. Honestly, now, you frightened me by the avowal, Sass, that you can read my thoughts through my brow."

"Ha, ha, ha—there lies the buried dog! The grape-juice makes us tell tales. To speak candidly, too, your uprightness pleases me right well, Mr. von Krone; there you have my hand, and it will rejoice me if in the future you are but seldom in need of me."

"Thanks! The wine certainly brings out what it should not—for the engagement in question, by express wish on the side principally concerned, according to the wish of the countess, was to be kept secret a short time."

"I wish you happiness from the bottom of my heart, Mr. von Krone, but I congratulate the lady no less. It is my honest opinion that her ladyship has made a fortunate choice, and people hereabouts all say the same. But it is certainly more than two months since they began to betrothe you secretly."

"So let them continue for a little; but I can rely on your silence then!"

"God bless me, yes! You may bethink yourself," Sass went on with a serious mien, though there was a roguish look in the corner of his eye, "that as the oldest servant of the family, and I may even say oldest friend, I understand the matter thoroughly. You will therefore not take ill from me a little remark? You see the Lehnsgrave is indeed an aristocrat, but not in an unreasonable manner. If before this time he had expectations that the countess would make, I do not say a better, but a more brilliant match, yet he will readily enough perceive the advantages of this, and give it his sanction when he has had time to sum up the matter. But what he will assuredly take ill is, if the thing be kept a secret from

him, and he discover it afterward. It will make a good impression on the old man if you boldly go to him at once, and open your heart to him. Perhaps he would—a—a—have no objection that you, before the betrothal is made public, got some little handle to put before your respected name. There is nothing really else needed, then you are *complete*! Just you speak to the Lehnsgreve, then go to Copenhagen, where, on account of your affairs, you must go sooner or later, and see to procure for yourself some small place in the State Calendar, whether it be among the nobles or the esquires—he! he!” wherewith, always suiting his mirth to the keynote, the bailiff giggled into his wine-glass with increased relish for its contents.

Waldemar heard these unexpected remarks with a changing play of features, his color going and coming several times meanwhile; he was already well accustomed to express no surprise at Sass’s utterances, which were generally peculiar, and he answered, therefore, with tolerable composure, that Sass had again read his thoughts, though with modification. The idea was good, and it must succeed.

With this, the repast was at an end, and the wine-flasks empty; Sass put the brown daler-notes in his pocket, declaring that he had never cracked the neck of a bottle of the old ’26 A. D. vintage with greater pleasure, or on a more joyful occasion; and so they parted.

Since her betrothed himself expressed a desire for it, the countess on the evening of that day communicated to her father what had taken place; and when Waldemar next morning, with a beating heart, went into the count’s chamber to learn his doom, he was received in the usual tranquil manner, though certainly with wrinkled brow.

“My daughter has informed me, Mr. von Krone, of what has passed between her and you, and I have quite candidly told her my opinion,” began the count, with some inward emotion. Then he continued, after a short

but painful pause: "and I think it is my duty to be alike candid with *you*. I could not advise Fransiska to accept your addresses."

"Count!"

"I beg you, sir, to hear me calmly to the end! It is an extremely unequal match; my daughter is some years older than you; her rank and means—for she has a considerable inheritance to look for from me—are also above yours, and she has in her time refused offers which undeniably were more suitable. Should she now really have resolved to marry entirely according to her own inclination, it will then be doubtful how far the bulk of my private fortune will fall to her. If she marries a man who cannot elevate her, but whom she must raise to be on a par with herself, then it will depend on that man's future career, if I intrust the fruits of many years' solicitude—I might almost say, of many years' exertion—in his hands. In short, you are too young to have given proofs of ability in any direction whatever. Your means are respectable, but do not in themselves guarantee that my daughter's future is secured by a union with you."

A dark blush covered Waldemar's brow on hearing these words, but he turned quickly round toward the count and answered, in a tone the firmness of which made the old man look up:

"His excellency, the count, is right that I am young, and I am glad that he himself acknowledges the most important objection against the match to arise from a circumstance over which I have no control. I am not without ambition; it was my uncle's wish, and is now my plan, to become a diplomatist."

"Then I must draw your attention to the fact that you have already strayed from the path. Will you, as the owner of Tiornholm, and—let us suppose—as my daughter's husband, submit to undergo an examination, or begin from the lowest office in the Foreign Department? Do you expect, without qualification, and at your age, to obtain any appointment? Do you think a

long betrothal a desirable prospect, when one has house, and home, and a good income?"

"That was just what I wished to say, count; your daughter will not come into any necessitous or undignified position by marrying me."

"You are mistaken, my dear sir, if you believe that my daughter, in the long run, will be content with a quiet household life at Tiornholm. I am forced to tell you that her heart is not free; she has been unhappily attached in youth."

"Yes, so she told me herself."

"Well, I am extremely glad that she did that. You see people can scarce, twice in their lives, love heartily; at least I could never do it, and I cannot easily imagine it done. And yet only such an undivided warm affection could bring her to forget that she marries below her rank. I always thought that if she married any one, then she must, in order to remain contented, choose a man who was older than she, and at all events in an exalted and brilliant position. This might make up to her for whatever was wanting in inward happiness, and fulfill the expectations naturally cherished by a lady of her birth. That she now makes a love-match, or something very like it, surprises me extremely. She deceives herself also in regard to you. I have noticed from her remarks, that she expects to get in you a very meek, submissive husband, while I fully believe that you will be sufficiently master in your own house. In short, from whatever side I look at the matter, I find weighty reasons for regret that it has come so far between Fransiska and you."

The count's observations surprised Waldemar in more respects than one, and he felt that the words contained golden grains of truth; this circumstance, however, made the answer he got only the more disagreeable at the moment, and he therefore rose hastily, and exclaimed impetuously:

"I wish, Count von Gyldenholdt, I had never set foot within your house."

"Yes, your visit here has indeed taken a surprising turn, and I honestly regret that it has led to a result of which I could never have dreamed."

"And it must then be permitted me to remind you that I have never forced myself on your lordship; I am here in consequence of an invitation, which, from your side, came quite voluntarily. Since I came here, Countess Fransiska has given so many evidences of her attachment to me, and you yourself, count, have in so many ways shown me your good will, that without all this I would not have stood here before you to-day with such a proposal."

"Well, well," answered the count embarrassed, and in a soothing tone, "I only wished to caution you; I have not said that if my daughter is firmly determined to have you, I will refuse my consent; I have only endeavored to prepare you for expecting that there must be conditions on my side, as——"

At the same moment the door opened, and the countess stepped hastily in. With heightened color, and a voice that trembled with anger, she said:

"So, then, father; let that be sufficient! You have now, with all your objections, sufficiently affronted and humiliated the man whom I, with free deliberation, have chosen as my future husband. Come, my dear father, give us your consent, and leave the rest to us."

"In God's name, then," replied the count with emotion, "take one another, and the Lord give you understanding how to conduct yourselves!" and thereupon he went hastily out of the room.

Thus matters were concluded, and the count had, as Hans once expressed it, set his seal to the matter; but the seriousness with which the count had taken things, and the reluctance with which he gave his sanction, robbed the occasion at the first moment of every appearance of happiness. The perplexed and despondent feeling with which Waldemar now grasped the countess's hand and kissed it had slight resemblance to the triumphant joy of a successful lover, and the scene was

very different from what in earlier times his fancy had pictured it.

His proposal that the betrothal should not be made public before he had attained a fitting position the count received without objecting to it; but he indeed treated all the questions relative to the affair with an indifference not very encouraging to the betrothed. As the die was now cast, Waldemar did not further take this to heart; the painful conversation with the count, when pondered over in calmer moments, and as its kind object became more evident to him, strengthened his esteem and attachment to his future father-in-law, and he resolved to win his entire confidence. There was no longer any vacillation in his mode of acting, and all he took in hand discovered a consistent endeavor to put to shame the old count's prophecies of evil.

He therefore set off in a day or two for Copenhagen, and was there received by Hans and Jane like a prince. Hans, who by Niels's letters had become quite tranquil with regard to the successful issue of the master's journey, showed no sign of curiosity, but redoubled the respectfulness of his bearing, and requested as an honor that he might assist at the morning toilet. That Niels meanwhile was fittingly pumped in the lower region is to be understood; and Mother Jane became duly overwhelmed with the important news she heard, and which Father Hans before this time had shamefully withheld from her. As Niels's letters had always contained a separate secret dispatch for his father, the good woman was now in some measure hurt by what she learned; she felt often obliged to go out to breathe the fresh air, and spent the whole forenoon in visits to her female friends.

It was with a peculiar feeling that Waldemar again beheld his home, and all those objects which so keenly reminded him of his good uncle. He had not now the satisfaction of being able to gladden him by his success; all grave contemplations were soon obliged to give way as the maelstrom of society whirled him into its vortex.

The world greeted him as one of its chosen ones, and offered him lavish incense; for his betrothal with the countess soon became as notorious as if it had been placarded on the street-corners. Everything succeeded with him, all smiled on him, nothing arrested his prosperous course. In spite of his youth, yet through the interest of the Gyldenholdt connections, royalty itself was moved to appoint "*Cand. phil. Waldemar Krone*" to be Master of the Buckhounds for the Court, in room of a predecessor retiring on pension; and Hans's hands shook with joy the first time he helped his young master to put on a new suit of the uniform appropriate to that post. To wear such a costume, and to do it honor, was, according to Hans, a birthright in this case; and no one could be more willing to agree with Bailiff Sass that now the young master "was complete." It might then be that Hans's fingers itched to fasten the late chamberlain's chains and orders on the green coat; but this, too, might come ere long!

The mansion in Amalie Street was now sold. Hans at last really established a public-house, which soon delighted him by becoming the steady resort of the finest gentlemen of the serving class. Jane was made happy with some old furniture, curtains, and linen; after which the rest was packed up to be sent to Tiornholm.

One of the last days of his stay in town Waldemar met on the street an acquaintance who forcibly reminded him of the changes which had passed with him during the last half year. It was Baron Malte.

"Well, my dear Master of the Buckhounds," said he gayly, "may I congratulate you both lengthways and across? You are in truth the favorite child of fortune! What did I say the last time we walked on the esplanade together?"

"Thanks, dear baron! some part of what you said on the esplanade I would rather forget."

"So it is my turn now to be put out of countenance! Yes, on that occasion I was a prophet of ill omen, and saw everything grim and dusky."

"Certainly to-day, on the contrary, you look quite brisk and lively. Have you, perhaps, under *incognito*, trod the path of love, and found a young girl sufficiently endowed with melancholy, and with contempt for earthly possessions?"

"Ha, ha! No, that is far off in prospect with me; I am not one of the forward children! I have gone into farming with all my might, and now torment all my friends with rotation of crops and improved turnips; while I drive my steward at Soborg to despair with all my questions. He just runs away when he sees me out in the field. *Apropos*—I should really like to see you and Countess Fransiska as betrothed."

"That you may easily do; come across and visit us!"

"Do you say so? Count Wilhelm has indeed invited me over several times, and it may happen that you have me across the deep sea before you know a word about it! But by-the-way, I can give you news of our hospitable friend Frank. I visited him lately, and enjoyed it exceedingly; would you believe it?—we have become right good friends. We talked about you, too; have you not visited him?"

"No, I must candidly confess to you that, as Frank has never taken the slightest notice of me, I have at last lost the courage to storm the garret at Norrevold."

"Hm—indeed! Then I may tell you the pretty Annie is away, and the landlady has got in her place a girl who certainly would not tempt your mild authority. She is the most hideous scarecrow I ever saw in my life, but Frank is pleased with her, and maintains that it would be well for society if all servant-girls were like her. Farewell, dear Master of the Buckhounds, and remember me to all friends at Gyldenholdt and Dyrland!"

A day or two afterward the Master of the Buckhounds returned to Jutland. He was received by the countess with open arms, and by her father with more cordiality than he had expected. Waldemar's short absence had done good, and given the old man time to recover him-

self. Baroness Louise had in several conversations with her brother done her utmost to reconcile him to the match, and show him the injustice of considering it as a settled matter that it must turn out ill. On the contrary, she considered it a good thing that Fransiska had at last found a husband to her mind, and it was even possible that such a handsome and richly-endowed young man as Krone might gradually win her entire affections, especially when they were married; and therefore she advised the count not to lengthen out the time of the betrothal, but, on the contrary, to hasten the wedding.

Any special declaration of the betrothal did not take place, as the count preferred to omit this form; however, in the usual fashion, the engagement was communicated to friends and relatives. A number of polite calls were received in consequence, and some suitable return-visits were paid, followed by a large party at Gyldenholdt, and repeated excursions to Tiornholm; but Waldemar remained henceforth at Gyldenholdt, while Tiornholm was managed for him by a land-steward, recommended on Sass's part.

The plan was made for a new mansion-house; the countess selected the site; and Dr. Goldschmidt here disclosed a richness of fancy which terrified the Lehnsgreve, and called forth the remark that it was easily seen the doctor was not to pay the expenses. The countess was, however, entirely on his side, and Waldemar himself evinced much desire to get as grand and tasteful a mansion as possible. The Lehnsgreve once took him to task about this, earnestly striving to bring him to reason.

"One thing must agree with the rest, Krone," said he. "It is not consistent to build a castle which will bring debt on the estate, and become a burden merely to be borne by every proprietor of Tiornholm who has not other means. That is just throwing money away."

"I must own you are right there, dear father, but——"

"But what—eh? if I am in the right?"

"For some days I have gone about with an idea in my head which I have not ventured to come out with, as it touches on a delicate point. I am afraid that you may take it ill."

"Whatever is not said with any bad intention, I never take ill."

"Would it not be to you a pleasant and soothing consideration if you could be sure that your private fortune was preserved for all time——"

"No circumlocution, Krone! To the point of the matter!"

"Now," replied Waldemar hurriedly, as if to get soon done with it, "what does my honored father say to the idea of buying Faubjerg estate, uniting it with Tiornholm, and erecting this property into an entail for Fransiska——." The count started. "And for me, or rather for our descendants, Tiornholm should then be the mansion——"

"And therefore a castle must be built at Tiornholm which may be worthy of an heir of entail?"

"Particularly, my dear father, of such a lovely and amiable one as Fransiska."

"Well, I must say," remarked the count, with some vehemence, while he rose and paced the floor with long strides, "that you are the lad for hitting on a plan. Who shall build the castle, you or I?"

"I shall."

"And what shall it cost?"

"I thought about thirty thousand thalers; that is to say if you, father, go into my notion."

"You have not," continued the count with dry humor, "a little rough outline of the erection of entail in your pocket; shall it be heritable on the female side?—hm!"

"No," answered Waldemar, gayly, "all that I leave entirely to the founder of the entail—to you, father, yourself!"

The count walked up and down the room in deep silence a minute or two, and Waldemar took care not to disturb him in his meditations. He marked the

old man's expression, and it did not escape him that the seed had fallen into good ground. At last the count said :

"I wish to give you a satisfactory answer; I will really weigh this matter!"

Waldemar now wisely kept himself quite passive; but he remarked a mysteriousness in Sass's look, and a bustle in his manner which augured well. He however never once mentioned before Fransiska the proposal he had made to her father, and this little trait of delicacy, which afterward came to the knowledge of the latter, was specially appreciated.

The count held first several consultations with himself, next with Sass, and, after the lapse of a fortnight, the two old gentlemen delivered a decision. The longer they weighed the matter the more advantageous points they discovered in it, and at last they came to the resolution that no better means could be found by which Krone's position could be elevated, the count's money be well invested, and the countess's future secured. There was something tempting both for the master and the servant in all the activity which the execution of the plan demanded, and at last both wondered that neither of themselves had thought of it.

Waldemar thought in his own mind that his worthy father-in-law, from a pardonable weakness, would make the idea his own, and thus appropriate the whole honor to himself, but in this he was mistaken. For when the count, in the presence of his daughter and Sass, had communicated to his future son-in-law that he proposed to elect an entail for him and his future spouse, Tiornholm to be included in it, he added, that he himself, from the day that the matter was settled, would allow them half the receipts which his own contribution to the infeoffment should bring in. While the pleasure and surprise of the countess at this information expressed themselves in a lively manner, Sass took the young Master of the Buckhounds into a window-recess, and said :

"Do you know, jaegermester, I envy you the idea !

On my honor, it did you a good turn; it was a clever little mine you laid there, which blew the old man's last intrenchments into the air. In short, it exploded all the stipulations! He showed me a few of the said stipulations, which you were to fulfill before becoming his son-in-law, and faith! they were unpalatable soup, that you may rely upon! If he had not got these crotchets out of his head, it would have been long till the wedding—but *now*! All clouds do not bring rain with them, as people say, and this one has brought pure sunshine. You may rely on it that I shall strike while the iron is hot; and it looks, too, as if the count will pursue the matter with a zeal that is rare with him. He wishes, I can fancy, to get this arranged *before*," hesitated Sass, with some agitation, "but God grant it be long till then—before he lies down to rest, over in the chapel yonder. And in truth, dear jaegermester, he deserves to rest, for he has accomplished a good long day's work!"

The gladness was now great at Gyldenholdt, and the activity almost greater; the count and Sass worked at the entail, the jaegermester, the countess, and the doctor at the castle, the walls of which, in the course of a month or two, began to rise above ground, in the prettiest spot which could be found, under shelter of the venerable oaks, and with the smooth sea before its base.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE STRONGEST.

"Now, good folks all!" said the pastor one morning at the breakfast-table, with his gayest mien, "to-day is the second of May, and so we have not quite three weeks till father, mother, and Frederica come. Have you reckoned it up, Ida?"

"Oh, uncle, haven't I!" she said, with an earnestness that perhaps escaped her unawares.

"And that you say in the most dismal tone possible. Shall we then have it on our consciences, Ida, that you have lost your good spirits at the parsonage?"

"I had not much of them to lose when I came, dear uncle! I think I shall go away, at any rate, no worse than I arrived."

Madame Kortsen now entered, dressed for her morning walk with Ida, who was all ready.

"Remember to gather flowers for Lise's glass," still merrily said the pastor, as they went out; but when the door closed behind them, he walked hastily up and down the room for some time, then stopped abruptly in front of the chair on which his wife sat, and exclaimed:

"What is love, Lise? Is it life or death, food or poison? How few receive happiness from it, and how dearly paid for are sometimes its purest joys! It cuts me to the heart to see Ida daily dragging forward the cross which the Lord has laid on her shoulders; she bears it with fortitude, but it affects her strength."

"Do you not think that she will recover it again after a little time is past?"

"I fear not, Lise! We now know from Lene that it is an old wound."

“‘Two plants grew up
In foster-father Hilding’s house,’”

quoted he thoughtfully. “Ah! how little Stainforth thought, when he was considering whether or not he should take that little Waldemar Krone into his house, that on his decision depended the fate of his best-beloved child!”

“Kortsen, I do not understand that Krone,” said his wife. “How could he thus leave his early choice? What *would* he have to set above the best?”

“Yes, certainly! I have difficulty too in judging Krone with mildness. He seems to me to be a man of feeling; but perhaps he had earlier ties to the countess. It may be that his crime was greater in allowing himself to be captivated by Ida than in tearing himself free from her.”

“How grandly might it all have gone if this detestable fine lady had not been in the way.”

“In that case we should not probably have seen Krone at all—so there is nothing to say either of grandeur or misery. I am grieved for Krone that he has attached himself for life to such a haughty and worldly lady as Countess Fransiska. He has chosen to be—and will now probably remain, as so many have been before him—a child of this world; but since such is his choice, it is very doubtful if a union with him would have brought Ida happiness. But Lene and Countess Adelaide are of the same opinion.”

“It is, perhaps, wrong of me, but when I think how kind and amiable Ida is, it seems to me incomprehensible why the Lord often sends the most sorrow to the best people.”

“The answer is easy! Whom He loveth He chasteneth. You speak, moreover, about the God who gave up His only-begotten Son to a shameful death, and who teaches us that through great tribulation we must enter the kingdom of heaven. But I have, alas! not much to say to you on this matter, for, dear Lise, however well people may think that I preach, my own faith

sometimes appears to me very weak; and I feel that the world has too large a share in me. No; in this Ida has already come far further than I. Even when she was happiest, when the roses of health bloomed on her cheek, and when her sweet eyes beamed with love and gladness, even then she did not forget her God. Would I were but as sure of everything else as that God will not forget her."

Aunt Lene and Ida had meanwhile taken their short stroll down the path through the fields, and returned to the garden; for the happy times when she could pass through the woods of Tiornholm to Fisher's Headland were gone by. Ida had a bouquet of wild violets in her hand, and she musingly contemplated them:

"I am always sad, dear Aunt Lene, when I see violets. When our Harald was buried a large and extremely beautiful wreath of violets was laid on the coffin. Mother, Clara, and I stood up stairs, and looked as they bore him across the market to the church-yard. I scarcely looked at the coffin, but merely at the sweet purple wreath which the sun shone upon. It was to me as a token that his soul was with God in peace and joy. How could I thus get comfort from those poor flowers, which next day lay withered on the grave?"

"My sweet child, do not dwell on such sad things!"

"Is it so peculiarly sorrowful?"

"Yes, that it is, God knows! At your age one says such things lightly, for want of deeper experience."

Good Aunt Lene had specially prescribed to herself, as a duty, to communicate to Ida a piece of news which had of late become generally known, and which she, too, must learn sooner or later—to wit, Waldemar's betrothal. As yet, she evidently had not heard of it, however well prepared she might be for the tidings. Her aunt wished to tell it to her alone, in order to spare her emotion in the presence of others; but still she shrank from touching the fresh wound, and thus the walk had passed over without the matter having been mentioned.

As they approached the house, the clerk's wife came

through the field-gate and asked if the pastor was at home. Madame Kortsen was not much in the humor for a long gossip, but Dame Jensig could not let such a good opportunity pass unused, and she began immediately to speak about the blessed weather and the beautiful linen the pastor's wife had lying out to bleach; moreover, as she had come straight past the village of Mastnip, about the severe sickness which prevailed there; next she remarked how sad it was to see how Miss Stainforth was falling off of late. She asked if the young lady would not try her Haarlem drops, the excellence of which she praised, till, suddenly interrupting herself, she struck her hands together and said:

"And I quite forgot to tell you the news! Have you heard that Mr. von Krone has come home from Copenhagen, and that his betrothal with the countess has been made public? Only think, he has become Master of the King's Buckhounds; and——"

"Ah, get off with your Master of the Buckhounds—your countesses, and all the pack!" exclaimed Madame Kortsen, utterly enraged; while drawing Ida into the house with her, she slammed the door in the face of the astounded Dame Jensig.

Was it other than what Ida every day for the last six weeks had expected to hear? And yet the blow struck alike hard when it came, and there was no use in resistance.

It was certainly an uncomfortable dinner! The pastor's cheerful mien was gone, his wife's look was distressed, Aunt Lene's indignant. The plates, knives, and forks jingled as in mockery, and scarcely a word was spoken at table. The pastor was reminded of a saying of a friend of his, that he would rather eat his meal in a church-yard than at a table where all the guests are silent; and he made an attempt to set on foot some conversation, but the words fell to the ground heavy as lead.

As Ida after dinner sat on her seat by the window, she started every time the door was rather noisily shut;

every moment it seemed to her that a carriage came rumbling over the bridge; when one of the servants ran across the yard, she thought some misfortune had happened, and, in spite of all this inward anxiety, she sat motionless on the spot, and did not observe what went on in the room.

The post had come; the pastor had found among his letters one with the Stromby postmark, had opened it, read it with a disturbed mien, and then gone into his own room, motioning his wife to accompany him.

How long Ida had sat on her seat in this uncomfortable dreamy state, she did not know; but she was aroused by a hand gently placed round her neck; a warm tear fell on her cheek, and, as she looked up, Aunt Lene kissed her. Ida sprang up, contemplated her aunt's features, on which sorrow was depicted, grasped her arm, and said:

"My God! Aunt Lene, some misfortune has certainly occurred at home!"

The old woman nodded her head repeatedly in a woe-ful manner.

"For God's sake, tell me at once what it is?"

"Thy father, thy beloved father——" Here her emotion burst forth, and the last words were inaudible; but Ida instantly understood their meaning; she sank back on the chair, and an abundant flood of tears relieved her heart, which a moment before seemed ready to burst. As true as it is that one sorrow seldom comes alone, so true is it also, that the one sorrow, particularly when they are of different kinds, in a manner drives away or keeps down the other. Ida heard with the deepest anguish, and while sobbing hysterically, that her beloved father had died suddenly by an apoplectic stroke, as he had himself often predicted would happen. Her own heart's-wound was now forgotten, but it had for a long time accustomed her mind to dark thoughts, and it had been of so peculiarly exciting a nature, at the same time, as to doom her to suffer with hands bound. She dared give free vent to this new pain, and it called for activity,

it made demands on her to soothe and assist others; and while her anxious friends had expected that this blow would stun her, just because she had a previous sorrow to bear, the opposite result occurred. As indeed was the more natural effect in a character like hers, she recovered her self-possession at once, and immediately commenced her preparations for the journey home. They set off the same evening, the pastor accompanying them, and Aunt Lise thus found herself in a more melancholy solitude than she had ever before been left to.

The captain is dead! These tidings, which one morning a few days before had passed like a railway train through Stromby, had awakened dismay and sympathy in almost every house in the town, and gathered a kindly but curious crowd round the post-house. He had just got up and had finished dressing, he had sat by his wife's bedside and read aloud to her a chapter from the Bible, as was his morning wont, when the words died on his lips, the book fell from his hands, and he expired with a sigh. His father had died in a similar manner, and it had been a firm persuasion with him that his end would be sudden too. He fell like the strong oak, which the lightning smites down in the forest; but if any human being ever can be sufficiently prepared to stand on a sudden before the judgment-seat of the Most High, he must have been so. It was an easy and happy death for himself, but a fearful blow for his disconsolate widow, his children, and all his friends; among whom we must reckon all the poor, the sick, and the sorrowful, whatever was their number, at Stromby.

Bruun and Clara were already with Mrs. Stainforth before evening, and Clara remained with her till the funeral was over. Alas! this time death had given them no warning, and there was nothing else to do but seek comfort in common pain. The evening before the funeral came the beloved ones from Bonderup; and now for the first time, as Mrs. Stainforth pressed Ida to her heart, and when they had spent some moments beside

the coffin, a slight alleviation of feeling came to them ; indeed, nothing affected Ida so deeply as to see how much older her mother had become within these few days.

At the funeral, the pastor carried the head of the coffin, which was adorned with flowers ; many hands were required to carry it, yet all who wished to do so could not get room ; way was made, however, for Martin Bruun. The following was so numerous that the like had seldom been seen in Stromby. A portion of them walked along, as always happens on such occasions, talking about indifferent things, or discussing the captain's affairs—what debts he might have left, how the family would be provided for, and so forth.

"The captain was in the vigor of life, and beyond ordinary strength into the bargain," said an old burgess, shaking his head ; "but, God help us ! Death is stronger yet than any of us."

"Still he is not the strongest," said a young man in the dress of a priest, who went before, turning his pale thoughtful countenance round toward the speakers. "Happily, friends, there is One stronger than Death !"

This young priest was the same who had so early lost his betrothed, whose bones rested in the corner of the church-yard, and it was he whom the captain had so often comforted in the days of sorrow. What the captain had then sown in his torn heart had borne fruit, and it fell now like ripe golden grain on the captain's grave, and into the hearts of the listeners, for it was beside a common benefactor's grave that they met. Several of the company gave vent to their emotion in words more or less formally ; among the rest, Pastor Kortsen sketched the life of the deceased in some graphic sentences, with a warmth to which every man there said, in his heart, Yea and Amen. Next morning the grave was quite covered with wreaths ; a few days after, a deputation from the town's-people begged the permission of the captain's widow to erect a tombstone to his memory at the expense of the community. This was in time car-

ried out, and for inscription a verse was chosen from those sung at the grave; it ran thus:

"Quenched is the light
That cheered the wretched here:
Snatched from our sight,
Its beams in heaven appear;
Death's heavy door hath hidden it, yet still
Its memory lives, our hearts with praise to fill."

There was consolation in all this. Certainly there is a soothing influence for the bereaved in the sympathy of others, but the greatest consolation is in the consciousness that the departed leaves behind him only dear and honorable memories. Their hearts were now in truth filled with these, which, as being all that remained of the captain, drew the little circle closer together than it had ever been before; but the vacancy was often all the more keenly felt, and it was then that they seemed for the first time to have known what a place had been filled by the departed one.

The new postmaster came, and the family removed into a small dwelling they had taken, more suitable to their contracted income. Old faithful Brask was inconsolable; it was true, owing to warm recommendations from all sides, he had become head-clerk also to the new postmaster; but for the latter only the head-clerk existed, not the individual Brask. How, indeed, on the other hand, could it be thought possible that any one could make up to *him* for the captain? For several days he was never heard to utter one word beyond what was absolutely necessary, and he made a daily pilgrimage to the captain's grave. The handsome monument seemed first to reconcile him a little with the world again, and the captain's burying-ground became Brask's garden, where, subject to the judgment of the family themselves, he labored to bring forth and maintain a little paradise of flowers. His main comfort, however, was to visit the captain's widow, as she was now generally called in the town, to talk about former days, and to do her every little service that lay in his power. The let-

ters that came to the post-office to be sent off from the Stainforths, or that the post brought for them,—though of both sorts there were but few,—were constantly laid by in a privileged corner of his own desk. It was long before Brask could get accustomed to see the figure of a stranger take the captain's seat on the office-stool. How often had the captain, when he sat on that stool, suddenly turned round to Brask, and by some serious or humorous observations startled or amused, but always informed him! And not seldom had the captain asked his advice in matters of importance; while the question was put in such a form, that though the problem to be solved was clearly set before Brask, the circumstances that gave rise to it were not always revealed,—a mode of proceeding necessitated by respect for the secrets of others, often intrusted by them to the captain. The captain took many of these sad secrets with him to the grave, and there may have been some persons to whom it was a tranquilizing thought that these were now in such safe keeping.

All but Frederica had forgotten Frank in the day of sorrow. She sent him a mournful but cordial letter, in which, in the name of the rest of the family, she invited him to follow her father to the grave; but the letter did not come to Frank's hands early enough for him to be at Stromby in time. He arrived there next day, and went into the office, where he met Brask alone. The appearance of the latter was mournful, and he spoke quite low, for he long had a feeling as if the deceased were present at official hours in the post-office. He told, with tears in his eyes, of the captain's sudden death, the great grief of the family, the sympathy of everybody, and then about the funeral. Frank listened seriously and in silence; he had indeed regrets, but he felt now, as always, unfit to express them, or to offer consolation. Sad feelings were rare guests with him, and death was to him only and simply a terror and a riddle.

He followed Brask, though reluctantly, to the church-

yard; the family being at Randrupgaard, where they would remain for some few days. The two lingered for some moments by the captain's grave, and here Frank was visited by strange thoughts. Whither had this strong mind, so calm in its persuasion, so full of faith in something which Frank considered as a phantom,—whither had it gone when it burst its earthly investiture? Had it found what it sought, or had a cruel disappointment awaited it there? How could the unbelieving Frank doubt of it, that the soul of the captain had been disappointed? And yet he secretly shuddered at this thought—the despair of such a disappointment. There was something inconceivable in it all, and therefore he felt as if the ground tottered under him; his understanding protested against this weakness, but yet he was shaken, and could not reason away the facts. He felt constrained to break the silence.

“Where do you think the captain is now?” he asked Brask.

“Where is he?” returned Brask in astonishment. “In Paradise.”

“And where is Paradise, Brask?”

“Where is it?—it must be where the captain is.”

Frank began to envy Brask, who still believed in something—in the captain, to wit; he believed, indeed, in much more, but thus Frank interpreted his reply.

In the afternoon Frank went out to Randrupgaard, and then he first felt the full significance of what had occurred. On seeing those he most cared for so bowed down with affliction, he became deeply distressed; and on seeing them alone without *him*, he first realized that his fatherly friend was indeed gone.

He found Ida more changed than the recent loss could almost explain; she had become pale and thin, and as he had heard little about her Jutland journey, he asked her if she had had any illness or other sorrow besides the last. Ida thanked him heartily for coming, but was nevertheless silent and reserved; Frank saw her again with far less emotion than he had expected, but still felt

somewhat embarrassed, and there was of course no longer the ease between them that had existed formerly. Frank felt himself thus naturally drawn toward Frederica, on whom the burden of sorrow rested lightest, for she was only sixteen; but still her manner had lost the restless and rather sarcastic tendency it had formerly displayed. Frank had then seen Frederica's faults in too strong a light, since he once thought she would turn out a coquette; it is thus, doubtless, that a young girl's first expressions of gayety and independent opinion are often misunderstood. Frederica was of a lively turn, she felt warmly, and judged without long consideration; but she showed herself entirely as she was, and every dissimulation was foreign to her nature. Frank's positiveness and peculiar views were apt to tease her, and draw out the least amiable phase of her character; but the disinterested and more experienced would easily have discovered in Frederica's behavior toward Frank something else than indifference. However much gentleness and kindness of heart she had in her bosom, it all came to light at this meeting in the day of sorrow.

"It has been a fearful time, dear Frank," said she, as they sat alone together in Bruun's parlor. "You know how much father was to us; you may well believe that it is an irreparable loss. We shall all feel the want of him till the day of our death."

"He was much to me, too, Frederica; but I have now, I know not rightly whether justly or unjustly, the feeling that I did not completely appreciate him while he lived."

"I have that feeling too; I have been a great child, Frank, but that is over now. What a sorrowful future awaits my mother! You may be sure that both Ida and I will do all in our power to ease her burden. I thought the first day that she would not have survived it; she could not weep at all."

"Will you stay here with the Bruuns? I hope so."

"No; how can you think so? Both Bruun and Clara have been exceedingly kind, but so they are

always; they have asked us to remain here permanently, but my mother would not do so—not even if a board were paid.”

“But then Madame Kortsen will at least stay with you?”

“No, nor that either. My mother says that Aunt Lise cannot do without Aunt Lene, but that she herself has enough in Ida and me. I have penetrated my mother’s feeling; she will not live at the expense of any one, not even of Aunt Lene. How I love my mother for it! Others say that we cannot live on my mother’s pension, but she herself maintains that we can, and Ida is still more certain of the matter. Now I don’t understand it, but Ida has already told me that we must work, in a manner; and why should we not be able to do so?”

“Do you not remain, then, at Stromby?”

“Yes, we do; my mother will not leave it. A small lodging is already taken for us in Schmidt Street. Who do you think saw after it? Brask and Ida herself. She is the most composed of us. And yet, Frank, does it not seem to you that she looks very poorly?”

“More is the pity—yes.”

“I fear, Frank, that she is very unhappy; dear, sweet Ida! When I think how merry we all once were! Ida often weeps when she thinks no one sees it. Would that I knew what ails her, and that I could comfort her! You look at me as if you knew better about it than I. Do you know anything, Frank?”

“How should I know——”

“Frank! You have no more confidence in me than all the rest of them; it is perhaps childish in me, but it wounds me. My mother and Clara know something, and I have also my own conjectures; it may be as it will, I will be twice as kind and attentive to Ida as I used to be in times past.”

Thus Frank often talked with Frederica during the day or two he remained at Randrupgaard, and a cordial relation developed itself between them, which, with

Frank, healed the wound which Ida's rejection had caused him. He now thought it strange how he had come to offer himself to Ida; for it was not by any means his intention that morning, when he met her by the mill. He did not, indeed, feel himself elevated and ennobled in Frederica's society as in that of Ida's, but still there was something peculiarly winning in the confidential and simple fashion in which she talked with him.

"Look here," said Frank to himself, "this is something good and Platonic, and I shall strive to preserve it. What is to hinder a calm relation of friendship between man and woman? I believe in it; it is beautiful; and another time I shall be on my guard not to get myself and other folks into scrapes by silly declarations of love."

With this judicious resolution, of which Frederica was very far from dreaming, Frank journeyed back to the capital. Mrs. Stainforth had, however, thought more about Frank than he was aware of. In spite of her grief she remembered that their narrow accommodation and poor circumstances would make Frank's visits to Stromby in future impossible, and she knew him well enough to feel sure that he would not make use of the hospitality of Randrupgaard in the same manner as that which they had formerly shown him. Besides, Herr Bruun that summer proposed building a new dwelling-house, and as the old one was taken down there was little enough room for the family, not to speak of visitors. Therefore she begged Aunt Lene to make sure, instead, that Pastor Kortsen invited their friend to Bonderup in the summer holidays.

A day or two after the funeral, the pastor went home, accompanied by his sister-in-law, who in her heart resolved that in some way or other she would manage to help the Stainforths. She parted with a heavy heart from them all, and especially from Ida; even the pleasure of getting them over to Bonderup on a visit was now hopeless, at least as regarded Ida.

It was not long before the captain's family removed into their new little dwelling in Schmidt Street, and they felt there, in spite of many small wants, the comfort of having a home of their own. Bruun and Clara visited them often, and Brask's presence was a comfort to them, as well as a help at times in small matters. On the other hand, the greater portion of their former circle of acquaintances drew back from them, partly because their small income hindered them from taking part in society, partly because, under the auspices of Mrs. Bek, the pastor's wife, a more aristocratic tone was developed in the town; people became more exclusive, and social meetings were arranged in a more expensive style than formerly. Brask thought this was the result of the town being left to take care of itself; the captain was no more, and no one but him had influence enough to put a stop to all this folly.

Mrs. Stainforth, and more especially Frederica, certainly felt now and then wounded by the slight shown them; Ida, however, remained quite indifferent about the matter, or rather, was pleased at the want of notice in which she now lived. She had for some time occupied herself with an idea, which she at last communicated to her mother and sister; she proposed to them that she should open a school for little children, as she knew that there was a want of such in the place; but she met with greater opposition from her mother than she had expected. The latter thought it too much that a girl of nineteen should wear herself out in the fatiguing occupation of keeping school; and perhaps also her motherly vanity was wounded at the thought that Ida, of whose destiny she had had such brilliant expectations, should end thus. She therefore called it an overstrained idea, and begged Ida to think no more of it.

"You have surely, dear mother," replied Ida, "not thought over all that is comprehended in this plan. In the first place, we need some addition to our income, unless our wish to live independent of others is to be suffered to become an illusion; the little surplus the auc-

tion left us is almost used up. In the next place, I cannot support this objectless life, and when I really feel an inclination to do a little good in the world, why may I not try? Think, too, how much father did for the poor while he lived! Is it not sad to see how forlorn and neglected many of their children run about? When the school is well set agoing," added she, her eyes sparkling, and a faint blush animating her pale cheeks, "it is my idea to educate a couple of poor children for nothing."

Ida's powerful will ere long conquered all obstacles, and she really began her little school. Her talent for managing and instructing the young far surpassed expectation. The school was very successful, and Ida became so much liked and respected in her native place that once more she was the subject of remark and conversation.

"There is an instance," exclaimed Mrs. Bek, "of what the folly of parents may produce! Ida Stainforth, if my advice had been followed, might have been now one of the most distinguished and well-conditioned ladies in town; but she got leave to follow her own conceited notions, and she lifted her eyes too high. There is no doubt about it that she was in love with young Krone, and the journey to Jutland was a very cunning speculation of Mrs. Stainforth's; but what simplicity to fancy that a man with Jaegermester Krone's prospects would prefer little Ida, merely because she has a pretty face, before a bride like Countess Gyldenholdt! The result of the whole has thus been—that she keeps a school for poor people's children."

There was indeed no longer any prospect of Ida's becoming Mrs. Petersen, for the controller had already, a month before, married the judge's Emilie, and the antique toilet mirror was again in request to reflect a second angel!

Clara Bruun observed Ida's conduct at first with doubt and anxiety, but next with delighted admiration.

"Is that wound really cured?" she asked Ida one evening, as they sat together on the old spot in the pine-tree down by the mill-dam. "Are you now really contented with your fate?"

"If you are content with me, Clara, and my mother and the others are, then I too am content."

Clara understood the significance of the reply: "To me there is no longer any other pleasure than that of pleasing others." She laid her arm around Ida's waist, and thus they sat in silence a long time. The water purled through the sluices down over the stones, the wind sighed softly through the boughs of the old willow, the setting sun spread his purple tint over the green meadow and the smooth river; it was all as in the olden days, but yet—ah, how changed!

"Whence comes the imperturbable peace, Ida, which dwells in your heart?" asked Clara at last.

"There is not always peace in my heart, Clara; but when there is, I think it comes down from where father is now."

"So it came because you thought of him?"

"I not merely thought of him, but it was almost as if I heard his voice. How much of what he has said to me is imprinted indelibly on my heart! He said, just on this very spot, to me once: 'There are temptations everywhere, in the world without, and within ourselves; there are temptations in gladness, but in sorrow, too; if temptation comes near thee, my girl, then work!' So I work, Clara!"

CHAPTER XIV.

FRANK ON THE ICE.

ONE fine evening in the month of August in the same year, a boat glided along the shore at Tiornholm. The sea was dead calm, and the bold coast looked yet bolder, looming through the warm hazy air. There were three persons in the boat; one gentleman wielded both oars at once, and whistled, while he kept his eyes on the sea-fowl swimming past, and now and then seized his gun—this was Count Wilhelm; in the other gentleman we recognize, in spite of the fresher color and an elegant little moustache, Baron Malte; he sat at the helm, and by his side was Adelaide Gyldenholdt.

With her a remarkable change seemed to have taken place. Her features, which were tolerably regular, but still not actually handsome, were brightened by a fresh tint which was not the reflection of the sky's evening glory, but an irradiation of a still higher kind. She was very fair, and if, when she looked down, her face might appear common, yet, when she looked up, one was fascinated by the expression in her clear eyes. This expression was usually of a calm, self-possessed character, growing gentler when she addressed others; but to-day it seemed less clear and more warm than usual. She had, in her teens, been somewhat heavy in form, as was the characteristic of her family, and had thus looked more than her age at that time; now she had shot up, and seemed more slender, with somewhat of an erect, Minerva-like grace, looking younger than she really was, for most people reduced her five and twenty years to twenty at the utmost.

It was notable how much she looked to the side where Baron Malte did not sit, and how long she contemplated

the clear green water. In this sailing excursion, which had begun near the bathing-house at Dyrlund, and had now occupied three hours, the baron had spoken much with her, and in that hearty tone which proved that their acquaintance had made speed during the fortnight he had spent at Dyrlund, so as quickly to assume the comfortable and rather confidential character which suited the baron's taste. He had difficulty in observing stiff formalities, especially in his intercourse with ladies; those of the fair sex who did not, so to speak, admit him to a place by the hearth in their regards, he avoided meeting; and it is thus conceivable that in this manner he most frequently found a resort with the older ladies. Adelaide Gyldenholdt possessed just such equipoise of bearing, and yet at the same time so much gentleness of manner, that the precise conditions were present to lure forth what the baron called "the modest violets of drawing-room life;" in short, little cosy *tête-à-têtes*, while the chatter of larger company buzzed around.

The quietness of country-life certainly gave to the frequent confidential conversations with Countess Adelaide an entirely different character; the sighing of the wind through the wood, or the roar of the waves against the shore, formed an accompaniment to their conversations of a grander sort than the prattle of a drawing-room. They had not the charm which the shortness of the enjoyment would have given them in a drawing-room, but they became of far deeper value; and ripe judgment and clear thoughts became peculiarly attractive when their proof proceeded from such youthful lips. He often forgot the person in the subject of conversation, yet when she left him, the sensation of enjoyment he had felt while she was there was gone. It was difficult to reach a clear understanding whether this, on her side as well as on his own, was friendship or love; the countess, for her part, whatever the nature of her feelings, seemed no way perplexed within herself, or unaware of the direction in which they led.

The baron's thoughts, on the contrary, were often of

a metaphysical kind, and it is possible that by a round-about yet logical track he was solving the problem which occupied him; though it came out at last with a sudden impulse, as what follows will show.

"So," said Count Wilhelm, as they approached the pier, shipping his oars, and cocking his somewhat battered gray hat a little on one side, "now I will breathe a little. We can easily reach home before evening, and I have given Morten the signal to harness. I can see, moreover, that the gulls and wild-ducks know my white jacket now too well, so I have not got one shot at them to-day. Let us light a cigar—hey, baron! Waken up! Those are fearfully deep folds you have got in your brow! What were you thinking about?"

"Ah, dear count, they were not comfortable thoughts!"

"Let us get them, at all events," begged the count, while he handed the baron a cigar and struck a light. "I like to hear your curious ideas."

"There was nothing curious in them."

"Now, Adelaide, help me to snare him. Shall we sentence him, without any more beating about the bush, to say what he was thinking of?"

The countess looked with a smile at the baron, but as her glance was not answered, and he really had a serious mien, she replied:

"Certainly not, Wilhelm; let the baron alone!"

"Certainly yes, I say. Nay, my good baron, out with the speech!"

"As you will! I was thinking of the fleeting nature of all happiness, and of the curse which rests over the human race."

"Ha, ha, ha!" shouted Count Wilhelm, with a heartiness which is given to the laughter of but few mortals. "When I contemplate your satisfied countenance, which like your whole person has got broader since we first met, and when I next think of your large estate, it seems to me, 'pon my soul! that nothing but blessing rests over you, and that this is about the most curious thing I ever heard you say."

"Exactly! I was thinking of that portion of the curse which rests over the rich. In short, it is my visit to Gyldenholdt that I am analyzing; what gilded misery did I not perceive there!"

"Gilded misery? Everything there goes full sail," answered the count somewhat satirically. "We build both castles and entails, but sure enough the castle comes on faster than the entail."

"Have you not observed," said the baron, turning toward Countess Adelaide, "my friend Krone's gloomy looks? How altered he appeared to me! In truth, it pained me to see in what a constrained manner he received me, and to contemplate the despondency which the whole day mastered him."

"Oh," said Count Wilhelm, "he must have had some little misunderstanding with Fransiska; that is nothing new."

"And truly nothing good either! The whole of it led me to the impression that he is perfectly miserable; on a cold footing with his betrothed, and quite dependent on the old count and Sass."

"Krone's position has become what might have been expected," replied Count Wilhelm more seriously. "He must e'en drink as he has brewed. By that grand idea of the entail which Sass and uncle make such a fuss about he has bound himself hand and foot. Tiornholm is to be an integral part of the entail, which, observe, is not yet in existence; for it did not go so smoothly as they expected with the purchase of Faubjerg estate, and it is now my opinion that they will never get it; but they are on the watch for that, and Tiornholm is thus entirely subjected to the control of my uncle and Sass. Krone is not master on his own property; it is an undignified position, to be sure, and in his place I would not remain in it four and twenty hours longer."

"You speak boldly," interrupted Countess Adelaide with warmth, "and yet you would probably remain in it, as Krone does; at least I will hope so, for your own sake. All the disagreeable results and the constraint,

for instance, produced by the notion of the entail, Krone could not have foreseen. Uncle has now taken it up with warmth; he is always busy writing about it; it has become a kind of hobby with him. Krone has judged correctly in finding something which might entirely reconcile uncle to the match; and, let the world say what it will, Krone is too noble minded to have been lured by any mean advantage. He has now got a clear view of the matter, but meanwhile he has become attached to uncle, and has not the heart to grieve him by opposition. Krone's behavior has been exemplary; toward my uncle, dutiful and affectionate; toward Fransiska, most forbearing. What has he not gone through from her caprice! I am persuaded that they have both now got their eyes opened, and perceive that they do not love one another, perhaps have never done so. Fransiska bears the fetter like a spoilt child, Krone like a man."

The baron looked kindly at the countess while she spoke.

"I am glad to hear you say so," said he. "I have always felt myself drawn toward Krone, and though we have not become intimate, I have had the feeling that we might."

"But still," continued the countess, "I think with terror of the possibility that the whole may miscarry—just for my uncle's sake. He gave his consent to the engagement doubtfully and by constraint, but he has now firmly and permanently attached himself to Krone, and he has such a respect for obligations entered into that he will consider it a stain on his own honor if Fransiska breaks her word."

"When is the marriage to take place?" asked the baron.

"It is fixed for next summer; and how things may look by that time, God only knows. A remarkable change for the worse has recently come over Fransiska, for I never saw her before so cold and repulsive toward Krone as she was a short time since. Poor uncle does not seem

to observe it; his head is always so full of business, and then Fransiska controls herself in some degree in his presence."

"There is the carriage," said Count Wilhelm, taking out the oars and rowing to land.

"Can I believe my eyes?" exclaimed the baron, shading his eyes with his hands and staring toward the shore. "Yes, on my honor, it is just Frank himself, who is standing there on the pier, gazing up into the air! Hey—hallo!" shouted he, waving his hat and standing up.

After some delay, the figure on the pier straightened itself and waved its hat in return. Next moment the boat touched the pier, and Frank, for it was he, saw himself suddenly surrounded by a count, a countess, and a baron. The introduction proceeded; while the baron heartily shook Frank's hand, the countess bowed in a friendly manner, Count Wilhelm with a droll, doubtful expression in his countenance. The baron, with true aristocratic tact, took for granted the hospitable permission to invite Frank to come and see him; and Frank promised, after Count Wilhelm had repeated the invitation, to pay a visit to Dyrland next day, though, in giving his consent, he more resembled a pressed sailor, than anything else.

Count Wilhelm took his place on the box, the baron and the countess in the open calèche, and away it went! Frank beholding his friend carried off with as concerned a look as if he lamented that the unassuming Von Malte had got into bad company among people of express title.

"That was a droll spark to look at!" said Count Wilhelm, as he let the horses walk up the hill. "How in all the world have you made Mr. Student Frank's acquaintance, Malte?"

"Well, I must own, in the most singular mode in the world."

"That I can suppose," answered the count; you have always been fond of oddities."

"Come, no label is to be tied to the back of my friend

Frank," said the baron, half seriously, half in sport, while he threatened him with his finger:

"So be it, but beg him to use his eyes more civilly when he comes to-morrow! He certainly looked at me as if he would eat me."

The baron laughed, and related the particulars of his introduction to Frank's acquaintance; to which sketch the countess listened with interest, while Count Wilhelm declared that it was a great mistake in the goddess of fortune to give such a misanthrope 15,000 thalers.

"I, now, could make a better use of them," continued he; "I have indeed at this moment only a single gold coin in my purse."

The baron smiled in a peculiar manner.

"Yes," said the count; "you laugh at that, but I can assure you that I am the poorest farmer for ten miles round. It has cost me, and will still cost me, a pretty penny to get everything right on the farm. It is said, no doubt, that I received it fully stocked and inventoried—yes! It was charming rubbish altogether, and I believe, on my honor, that uncle and Sass had scraped together all the poorest, most miserable beasts from the other farms, and palmed them off upon me. 'Shall we not go down to the stables?' said uncle, the day I entered on the farm. 'It is not worth while,' I replied; 'let us wait another year, and then probably there may be something in the stalls worth looking at.' 'What do you mean by that?' asked uncle, in a sharp tone, while Sass looked at me with his owl's glance. 'I mean, dear uncle,' answered I quite candidly, 'that the stock is beneath all criticism; but as the lease is so much the better, the matter will adjust itself well enough for me.' And it is indeed much better than the old man himself is aware, but at this moment I am a pauper. Look," and here the count stuck his foot out of the carriage, "I wear patched boots, whereas your friend Frank had on a pair of terribly-prosperous bright-polished leathers; if we keep still, we may certainly yet hear

them creak down the path to Bonderup parsonage!—ha, ha, ha!”

“It strikes me,” said the baron, while his eyes twinkled, “that the near horse limps a little on one of his forelegs.”

The count turned hastily round toward the horses, and saw immediately that it was a trick of his guest; but after having threatened him gayly with his whip, he gave himself up to his duties as driver, while the baron, in a subdued tone, commenced a conversation with Countess Adelaide.

“Do you not think,” whispered he, that your kind brother is now almost tired of me? I meant to have gone home to-morrow morning, and here comes Frank to tempt me! I must absolutely have a talk or two with him. It amuses me to see Frank here, for I always thought he had grown as fast to the garret at Norrevold as a snail to its house. But I regret inviting him to Dyrland; his very appearance has been disagreeable to Count Wilhelm, and it will not, indeed, be any better on closer acquaintance.”

“Then the rest of us,” replied the countess kindly, “must make up for the defects as well as we are able.”

“But shall I go or stay?” asked the baron, while he contemplated his fair friend with a look between shame-faced sensitiveness, and determined inquiry.

“Stay; for Mr. Frank’s sake. You will surely stay a little?”

“No, that is not exactly what I mean. I go hence very reluctantly, and—if it would give you pleasure, of course! That is to say, Countess Adelaide, I wished particularly to know if it would be agreeable to you that I should remain?”

As the baron, with some haste and confusion, uttered these words, the countess cast down her eyes; but she raised them again immediately, looked into his with a blush, but yet placidly, and replied:

“And can you then question it? Certainly I should wish you to remain.”

Did this straightforward answer please or displease the baron? Had he expected a more delicate reply—greater coyness? Had his taste in the hot-house of social life become, after all, more refined and dainty than he was himself aware? His countenance expressed at this moment mixed emotions, but by degrees his mien became tranquilly satisfied. Possibly an attack of his old distrust had come over him, but if it were so, on closer consideration he must have acknowledged that the reply was expressed in an entirely natural tone; not just with childish simplicity, but with a certain placid candor which entirely harmonized with all he had heard of Adelaide Gyldenholdt.

Enough, that he determined to remain, and next day met Frank, according to appointment, at Dyrlund, where the latter was received in a more homely and cordial fashion than he probably had expected. Not the less was Frank quite out of sorts, and Count Wilhelm was not entirely wrong in the remark he made to himself, that Mr. Frank was a tedious starched pedant of a fellow. They got on together as badly as possible; hunting, farming, breaking-in horses, everything in which Count Wilhelm was at home, Frank had no idea about; and although the latter, from regard to his friend Malte, was very cautious in his expressions, yet this gave to his manner something stiff and awkward. When he could not well avoid making some answer, he was so unfortunate as to arouse Count Wilhelm's displeasure by the unpractical and theoretic character of his remarks.

After coffee, the count rose somewhat impatiently to look after the people who were cutting down the oats, and the baron and Frank went out by themselves into the garden, where they smoked their cigars.

"Well, what do you say about Krone now?" asked the baron. "Has he not managed his matters well?"

"Perhaps so in your opinion, not at all in mine," answered Frank, in a decided tone.

"Well, I only said so in order to learn what you thought of it. So much the worse for Krone. I am

afraid he is not only unhappy, but will somehow or other go to the deuce in the end!"

"I shall not be surprised to hear so," answered Frank coldly.

"Have you become quite indifferent toward our friend, then? Will you not visit him? He is every other day to be met with at Tiornholm."

"No," answered Frank with emphasis. "I should most certainly be an unwelcome visitor to him. If he is happy I should be a restraint; if he is unhappy it would be a miserable consolation to see the man who foretold him his misfortune. Quite indifferent I can never feel toward any person who in childhood was so closely bound to me; but I cannot dissemble, and thus cannot represent either to myself or to others that continued intercourse with Krone under existing circumstances can be pleasant or profitable to either of us."

"We, or at least I, may yet thank Krone for something good; without him we two had never seen one another, Frank."

"That is true," answered Frank in a tone of acquiescence.

"Honestly, now," began the baron once more, after a short pause, "are you indeed so well pleased at this acquaintance with me? Does it not annoy you that I am a baron and the owner of an entailed estate?"

"Not when we are alone, but sure enough in a place like this."

"Yes, it was a mistake my bringing you over here; but since it has happened, let me now hear your candid opinion of my host and his family. Praised be your blessed straightforwardness, Frank! Let me get a slight taste of it again; it refreshes my mind in the same manner as a salt-bath my bodily frame."

"In this case you might perhaps get too much of the salt, baron."

"If you draw in your feelers, Frank, you shall never see me again. Tell me, now, what specially causes you constraint in such a homely, hospitable house as this?"

"It is easier to say what does not cause me constraint there," replied Frank, after a moment's hesitation. "The count is certainly no fop or fine gentleman, but in spite of all his homeliness, the aristocrat is very apparent. He spoke to his people in a manner which made my blood boil, especially at the rating he gave the stable-boy because one of the horses was not well enough curried. He has in the next place a considerable partiality for flourishing his coat-of-arms everywhere; it stares me in the face from the signet-ring on his finger, from his silver cigar-case, and even at table, when I cast my eyes on the plate, and took a spoon in my hand to eat my soup, I was annoyed by the sight of that nine-branched fool's-crown, which seems to me like a challenge to the rest of mankind."

"Bravo, Frank, you are in force to-day. Go on."

"Dear Baron Malte," replied Frank seriously, "had we not better speak of something else? Either my expressions must wound you, or else I contribute to your amusement after a fashion which is not exactly flattering to my vanity."

"You are mistaken, Frank! It is something new to me to hear views like yours so openly expressed; and moreover, there is a chord in my own heart which vibrates to your harsh touch. I find in you thoughts which in their time have also arisen in my own mind, but which I did not venture to acknowledge; besides, I must candidly tell you that since then I have cast aside many of them. I now perceive that I then, as you at this moment, went to extremes in the sharp criticisms of myself and the follies of my rank; it often led me, as experience has shown, to an entirely unfair judgment of my fellow-men. Life itself is the best teacher, and it leads to great wanderings from the path, when by theory alone we seek the great goal—wisdom."

"No other reasoning can be expected from you, dear baron. Or, to speak more correctly, from your standpoint such a speech is relatively very free of prejudice. You were on the way to thoroughly sound and unfettered

views; but in the course of time you have yielded to the pressure exercised upon you by the society you moved in, and you have, moreover—forgive my saying it—yourself got a taste for the glittering allurements which your own rank holds forth.”

“And you, my good Frank,” answered the baron with a smile, “appear to me—forgive me for telling you so—at this moment when you so one-sidedly pronounce judgment on me and those of my class—to be in your own way as full of prejudices, and as obstinate in keeping them up, as the most hardened aristocrat is in keeping his. I am thus in no way at one with you; but you have a sharp glance, and do not always see wrong; it sharpens my self-examination to listen to you, and I draw profit from my conversations with you, while you, forgive me again, by reason of your blind zeal, receive no benefit whatever from me.”

Frank meditated a minute or two over this reply, and then said:

“You will not then seriously maintain that Count Wilhelm is a gentleman?”

“In all essentials certainly he is so. He has his prejudices and his faults, but he has good points of which you have no suspicion; ask his mother and his sister.”

“What offended me most to-day, dear baron, was the difference he showed in his behavior toward you and me. Though I cannot in every instance describe particularly in what it consisted, yet his manner of address constantly reminded me that in society you are a magnate, I a cipher.”

“If it were so, it is less to be ascribed to your being a student, I a baron and landed proprietor, than to your having made an unfavorable impression on him. Your demeanor, from the first greeting yesterday on the pier until now, has been of so dry and repulsive a character, and you have done so little to accommodate yourself to the little circle into which I introduced you, that the fault lies principally with yourself. But let us not talk

any more about Count Wilhelm. Let me now hear your opinion of the ladies—have they treated you in the same manner?"

"The lady-mother, yes; the daughter, no!"

"Tell me once for all your candid opinion of Adelaide Gyldenholdt," said the baron hastily, while he blew his nose, and thus hid his face with the hand kerchief.

"I was prejudiced in her favor by all the good I heard about her yesterday at the parsonage. The praise Madame Lene Kortsen bestowed on her and the sketch the pastor gave of her relation to Ida Stainforth agreeably surprised me. What I have seen of her to-day quite strengthens this impression; she appears to me an unusually kind-hearted, upright, but at the same time sensible girl, with no conceit at all. There is, in the next place, something about her," continued Frank with a smile, "which is a great recommendation in my eyes, though hardly so in yours, baron! She indeed gives one the idea of a lady, but not at all of a lady of high degree. Accomplished she is, no doubt, but she might pass as well for the well-bred daughter of a country pastor, or any other man."

"I knew, Frank," returned Von Malte, "that you could not say anything unkind about her, but I wished to hear your opinion quite candidly, in order to know what I should do. Don't be angry with me for tempting you forward a little on the ice; you really deserve a slight punishment for your inexorable severity, and I shall tease you a little too in the hearing of the countess herself, about the accusation you have brought forward, that an air of nobility is entirely wanting in her, and that probably she can never be made into a lady of distinction! That shall be when we come to Bonderup a day or two hence; for I will now tell you—and you are the first except the family I have informed of it—that this morning I asked the countess to marry me, and got her promise."

Frank received this intelligence with a dumbfounded look.

"Now, there is thus nothing in the way," continued his friend, "that in future, when I am married, I can invite you over to Soborg? It will not frighten you away that my wife is a Countess Gyldenholdt."

"No, certainly not," replied Frank, whose countenance by degrees had assumed a mild expression, such as it did not every day present. "I wish you happiness with all my heart."

"Thanks!" said the baron, giving a hearty shake to the other's outstretched hand. "We shall become real good friends, Frank—not when you have turned aristocrat, for that you never will—nor when I have turned democrat, for that is as little likely to happen—but when you have ceased to be a mere closet philosopher, and have become more a man of the world, by which I understand a man who knows something of the world!"

At Dyrland there was of course great rejoicing over this new betrothal. The old countess was greatly surprised; for, as her daughter in her girlhood, at a time when they mingled more with the world, had made no conquests, and now not only lived retired, but was also very quiet and reserved in her manner, the mother had given up all hopes of getting Adelaide married, nay, had dropped hope of the very possibility of so excellent a match for her. Her delight, indeed, shone forth rather naively, as she a day or two after talked with the pastor's wife, who came to Dyrland, along with her husband and Aunt Lene, to offer their congratulations; neither could she entirely hide her triumph, that her own daughter, the overlooked Adelaide, had made a far better match than her proud niece at Gyldenholdt.

"The matter certainly came on me quite unawares," said the old countess, with a glad smile on her kindly face; "it will no doubt surprise them too at Gyldenholdt."

"Yes, my dear countess," answered the pastor's wife, "those whom our Lord has appointed for each other will find one another out, wherever they may be situated; but this is really on both sides a happy choice and an equal union."

"On my word," said Aunt Lene, "the baron has a most winning manner of his own; when I had talked with him for ten minutes, I was as much at my ease as if I had known him ever so long; but he took me on my weak side. That is to say, he asked me how the captain's widow was, and how Ida was getting on. He had indeed, he said, never seen any of that excellent family; but first from Frank, and then from Countess Adelaide, he had now heard so much that was good and beautiful about them, that he had an intimate acquaintance with them at second-hand."

"But is it really true," said the countess, in a tone which almost sounded upbraidingly, "that Miss Stainforth keeps a girls' school in Stromby? To think that so charming a girl, in the bloom of youth, should wear her strength out in that fashion!"

"Hm!" answered Aunt Lene calmly, though guessing the countess's thoughts; "she did not need to do so; no, indeed she did not; there was more than one who had both power and wish to help them, but the willful child was not to be turned from it; and don't you think, countess," added she, nodding her head emphatically, "that we have credit by her in *any* capacity whatever?"

This decided view of matters was sufficient to close the conversation on that topic.

Count Wilhelm approved his sister's choice in every respect, and formed a tolerably correct estimate of both her and the baron. "It is undeniably a happy thing," said he to his mother, "that Adelaide makes such a suitable and advantageous match; but the best part of it is, after all, that they seem made for each other. Malte is in every respect a noble fellow, but he is impractical, and has not the tact necessary for business; he has read too much, and disputes too long *pro* and *contra* with himself before he makes a resolution. Nothing has therefore surprised me more than that he was only a fortnight in getting himself pledged; but he may thank his stars! Adelaide is an instance of the

truth that still waters run deep. Many a man might well wish to possess her capacity and clear thought; she will indeed be able to help her good husband's judgment in many a case, without his requiring to go to his steward; and, moreover, she has read so much, that she can enter into his taste for curiosities. A girl like Adelaide is very easily overlooked, but she is a pearl to him that finds her out. I have, and that oftener than you are aware, got good counsel from her, and in spite of your own unwrinkled countenance, it has seemed to me sometimes as if you, mother, were really my granddame, and Adelaide my maternal parent!—ha! ha!" and the careless young bachelor laughed heartily as he closed with a filial kiss, before hurrying off to his stables.

The old count and his sister heard of the betrothal with sincere satisfaction, and Waldemar Krone expressed his congratulation in so cordial a manner as both surprised and delighted the lovers, whom his previous reserve had annoyed. But there was something melancholy in the tone of his voice, usually so clear and sonorous; and at its altered note the baron could not help recalling in his own mind their conference on the esplanade the evening they took the garret at Norrevold by surprise. Against their fatalistic views in those days Providence had entered a mighty protest; for the disconsolate Martin Malte everything had turned out happiness and sunshine, but before the confident Waldemar Krone the future now lay spread forth like a desert, despite the gifts of fortune by which he seemed overwhelmed.

To none was the surprise greater than to Countess Fransiska; but whatever she then thought, she made her congratulations in the most charming style, only remarking in private to her fair cousin, "I am really delighted to see how the baron has improved; he is not nearly so *gauche* as when I knew him in town."

"I shall tell him so," replied Countess Adelaide, with an arch smile, "for he has told me that he once set great store by your judgment, cousin. But at that time he

certainly had not so much knowledge of mankind as now, and you have no small credit from his enlightenment."

In Stromby the news caused sincere pleasure to Ida, though it set some old recollections in violent commotion; but of this there was no trace in her reply to Adelaide Gyldenholdt. The baron read Ida's letter with attention, and as he gave it back to his betrothed, he said:

"I once went, dear Adelaide, on a hunt after persons of genial and unaffected character, and I have certainly in one year made a more numerous discovery of such than I can expect to repeat during the rest of my life. I am not in this thinking only of you, in whom, like a lucky treasure-seeker, I found my diamond, but of the others, too,—your kind mother, your brave, honorable, and faithful brother, the pastor's family at Bonderup, and then Frank. There lacked yet one precious gem to the collection, and of this I have now caught a sparkle or two. Your star, as you prefer to call Ida Stainforth, I must positively see with my own eyes; when we go to Copenhagen we will make an excursion to Stromby. What say you to that?"

The bright glance of Adelaide's clear eyes gratefully enhanced the warmth of an assent which was in itself all that Ida's fondest well-wishers could have desired.

CHAPTER XV.

AN ENIGMA, WHICH IS SOLVED.

DURING about four weeks from the time of his betrothal, Waldemar Krone represented to himself that he loved the countess, and believed that she loved him. After this season of intoxication followed a transition period, in which he slowly awakened to the knowledge of the true nature of the relation. With her increasing capriciousness, and all the vexations this prepared for him, the coldness in his own heart grew also. He thus passed through a purgatory of doubt to the point at which he now found himself; it had at last become quite clear to him that he had never loved her, in the deeper significance of the word, while he now began to doubt the possibility that she was capable of love in that sense. Subsequently, indeed, such a remarkable change for the worse had taken place in her behavior toward him, as inclined him to believe that some occurrence of which he had received no intelligence had produced it; or was the meaning of it, perhaps, rather that she was systematically attempting to force him to a breach with her?

There were weighty reasons which must restrain her from herself expressing the decisive words, if she really wished them spoken; the same or similar reasons had armed him with patience, and ripened the determination in his mind that from his side the breach should not come. He could well perceive that his mode of action might be ascribed, possibly even by herself, to unworthy motives; but this, he resolved, should not keep him from fulfilling his obligation.

WHO was the real object of his love he now knew with the more unmistakable certainty, as self-knowledge grew

with experiences so bitter; but he did not doubt a moment that by his own fault he had lost the affection of the sweet and pure-minded girl whom in his blindness he had so shamefully forsaken, under pretext of mere early friendship. Ida would assuredly by degrees forget him, and even if she did not forget him, could she yet ever have confidence in him again? How could the bond he had torn asunder ever be knitted together again? No; every hope of happiness was over for him, and he must now content himself as well as he could in saving the wreck which remained of his hopes' proud bark; he must not, by a new weakness, bring grief and embarrassment on the man he had now accustomed himself to call father. Material interests were mixed up with the business; he had already been at considerable expense on account of the projected entail, which now assuredly would be carried out, whether they got Faubjerg or another estate; he had begun the erection of a mansion-house at Tiornholm in grand style, and in case the engagement between him and the countess were to be broken off, it would occasion a painful difference, as he could never submit to receive any compensation, while it would be a stain on the count's honor if he were not permitted to repay it. The old count occupied himself meanwhile, perfectly satisfied, and unconscious of coming vexation, with the schemes which were to secure his children's happiness; and Waldemar felt that a breach, under these circumstances, might be a blow to the old man from which he would never recover.

If there were now and then moments when he sighed under the yoke, and felt tempted to purchase his liberty at any price, he repelled these thoughts as a temptation, and at last he resolved to make an attempt to restore a good understanding with his betrothed. The truth, however, appeared to be that it was not so easy to come to an explanation; for the countess avoided a *tête-à-tête* with great dexterity, and thus several days passed before Waldemar got his design executed.

At last, one of the first days in September, he met

her in the morning alone in the summer-parlor, where she was occupied in alternately feeding and teasing her parrot, which stood on a table in the window recess, surrounded by flowering plants in pots. She pretended not to observe his entrance, and Waldemar stood for some moments with arms crossed, contemplating her in silence. There were still remains of tender feeling for her in his heart, and though he no longer loved her as before, it pained him that she could look so coldly on him as she did when he now addressed her.

"Fransiska," began he in an earnest but gentle tone, "I am glad that at last I have met you in private; I have long wished to speak with you alone. May I offer you this chair, and ask your attention for but a minute or two?"

The countess did not take the chair, but still turned round toward Waldemar, drew her shawl closer round her, and leant back against the wall of the window recess, while she looked at him with a very peculiar glance. It was certainly very peevish, but yet there gleamed through it a strange expression of malicious triumph.

Waldemar Krone's features offered a marked contrast; while Fransiska's countenance had preserved all its beauty and fresh color, his was pale, and bore traces of great mental suffering; he had become much thinner, and the expression in his eyes gave evidence of inward weariness; he had grown older in that short half-year, but there was still a certain tranquillity in his appearance, as if his sufferings had ennobled him. As he continued to sit, lost in thought, after he had introduced the conversation in the manner related, the countess exclaimed impatiently:

"Must I beg you, then, to inform me—to begin rather this lecture to which you most probably believe it is my duty to listen?"

"You have of late, Fransiska," began Waldemar, rousing himself from his reverie, "without cause on my side, treated me with such coldness that I can no longer be silent about it; it will pain your father if he at last

becomes aware of it. If you persist in it, I cannot comprehend how you could ever have engaged yourself to me?"

As to that, doubtless, Fransiska in her own mind thought him quite right; it seemed often a puzzle to herself how she could have been guilty of such a folly; it was just that which irritated her probably, while she stood there and looked at him.

"Sheer scolding," replied she, flushed with anger; "you may surely spare this, and let the whole matter go its own way."

"That I certainly ought not to do; on the contrary, I beseech you to gather up the small particle of kindly feeling which still perhaps, as I hope, may be found in your heart toward me, and make a slight effort that our position toward each other may be endurable. The least attempt on your side in this direction shall be met half-way on mine. The happiness I had hoped to find in your society I see well enough does not await me there; it is possible, Fransiska, that I too may from the first have mistaken my own heart, but it is also possible that if you had not thrust me away so coldly, I should never have got an opportunity of discovering this, and that our life together might have been happy if you had chosen to make it so."

"It is quite like you to speculate over all these possibilities," replied the countess, with incomparable composure; "I do not plague myself with such useless reflections."

"Can matters really not be made harmonious between us still, Fransiska?" asked Waldemar in a kinder tone, coming nearer to her; but she moved from the window toward the door. "This really grows somewhat enigmatical," continued Waldemar, in an impatient tone; "at any rate, it would be more becoming if you would control yourself a little; you hardly constrain yourself in the presence of the servants."

Without answering, and with an impatient toss of her head, she wheeled proudly round, and hastily left the

room. Waldemar remained standing some moments motionless on the same spot; then suddenly turning on his heel, he went out into the hall, seized his hat, and went down to the stables to get his horse saddled. Shortly after he rode away from the castle at a sharp trot down the road to Tiornholm, but soon he slackened the smart pace of his steed, fell into gloomy reverie, and reached Tiornholm in the cold, careless mood which had lately become his usual state of mind. Without apparent interest he contemplated the new building, the cellars and first story of which were now completed, while the workmen plied their task vigorously to get the house under roof before winter. Some questions from the master mason he answered in a very absent manner, and then passed through the newly-planned garden into the wood, where he followed the path to the Fisher's Headland. There he sat down on the grass, and gazed long out over the sea.

Suddenly he heard the bushes rustle behind him, and Pastor Kortsen stood at his side; the countenance of the latter was lively and cheerful, but when he discovered Krone he became evidently confused. Waldemar, on the other hand, returned his salute calmly, and invited him by a wave of the hand to take a seat by his side, quite as if he sat on the sofa in his own room, and had expected the pastor's visit. The good pastor felt himself unwillingly controlled by the superior composure of Waldemar Krone's demeanor, and drew nearer, though without taking his seat on the grass; but it seemed as if his neighbor or host had quite forgotten his presence; and as this continued silence began to be disagreeable to him, he said as gayly as he could:

"Fine weather, jaegermester, and a charming prospect! This is really the prettiest spot on all your estate."

The jaegermester turned toward the pastor, looked at him for a moment in silence, and then said:

"Tell me, how are the Stainforths?"

The pastor was so disconcerted by this unexpected inquiry that he gave no answer at all.

"I have seen by the papers that the captain is dead," continued Waldemar, in an earnest, nay, mournful tone; "tell me all that you know about it."

This appeared to the pastor a somewhat strange request, as it was four months since this sad occurrence took place; but he now became observant of the morbid, dejected expression in Waldemar Krone's countenance, and with a secret dread that the mind of the young man was somewhat affected he hastily began his relation, during which his listener's attentive and rational look calmed him again. When he had done, the jaegermester asked:

"And what has then become of the family?"

The pastor now related what we already know; but as the jaegermester then specially inquired after Ida, and the pastor thus saw himself attacked in the center, he answered somewhat impatiently:

"She maintains herself, and in great part her mother, by keeping a school for little children."

A deep blush covered Waldemar Krone's pale face when he heard this; he rose hastily to his feet, and the pastor stepped aside, as if afraid that the fancied insanity was about to break forth; but Krone had meanwhile recovered his composure in some measure; he held out his hand to the pastor, and said with emotion:

"Thanks, dear pastor, for the information you have given me."

Thereupon he turned round, and went slowly into the wood. The pastor stood and looked after him; then shaking his head he betook himself homeward, making fearful devastation with his stick among the hemlock plants that grew along the path.

The jaegermester meanwhile returned to Tiornholm, took his horse out of the stable himself, and rode slowly back to Gyldenholdt. He was still deep sunk in thought when he heard the pavement of the court-yard clatter beneath his horse's hoofs. Thus aroused, he looked round as if he found himself in a place quite strange and

unknown to him, but soon his attention was arrested in a very unexpected manner.

He remarked standing in the court-yard an elegant traveling carriage, which the stable-men were busily cleaning, while a servant in a conspicuous foreign livery stood looking on. At the same instant a door in the left wing opened, and a servant in the same livery called out into the yard:

"Pierre! Les bottes pour Monsieur le Marquis!"

When Waldemar had dismounted from his horse, he went forward to the carriage and asked of the French servant, who was looking for the boots in one of the pockets, what was his master's name. At the answer he received he was so much surprised that he repeated his question, but the reply was still the same:

"Oui, Monsieur, c'est M. le Marquis de Beaufort."

In vehement emotion of mind he hastened up to his room, and walked up and down the floor for half an hour together; while a thousand diverse thoughts, the nature of which the reader may easily guess, rushed in on him. When Niels, however, came to help him to dress for dinner, he recovered his composure; he made his toilet hastily, and when he entered the drawing-room, he had the same calm, cold demeanor, as had latterly become usual with him.

He found the count and the marquis walking up and down the floor, as was the old man's wont, and as he, Waldemar Krone, had done the first day he spent at Gyldenholdt. But the count's mien was not to-day so calm as then; he was at this moment evidently very much out of sorts, and it seemed as if his French guest too was not quite free of the same unpleasant mood. Yet this expression entirely disappeared as the count introduced the two gentlemen to each other; for at the moment he bowed to Waldemar Krone, a haughty and sarcastic expression passed across the marquis's expressive features.

Waldemar withdrew to a chair in a window space, while the count and the marquis continued their promenade.

"Truly," said Waldemar to himself, "Notre François beau et fort est venu chercher sa petite jolie Française!" as he involuntarily recalled the words of Secretary Stolpe, and at the same time thought with what astounding composure he now repeated these words, which had once set his heart in violent commotion. But as he looked at the count, and noticed the deep furrows in the old man's brow, he thought with a feeling of pain that if the object of the marquis's visit was really so serious, they were all at this moment treading on a volcano; for he was persuaded that, as matters now stood, the count would meet every attempt to break off the engagement between his daughter and himself with the most determined opposition.

Meanwhile he narrowly examined the marquis, whose exterior did not quite answer to the conceptions he had formed of it, when in the olden days jealousy painted his rival's portrait before his fancy. Some resemblance there certainly was between himself and the marquis, but to any one who now saw them together it did not appear very striking. The marquis was not so tall as Waldemar Krone, but of a broader make; his face was most certainly handsome, but in spite of all the arts of the toilet, he still looked worn-out, and he was evidently old before his time; his glance was indeed bold, and yet at times somewhat dull, and there was a sprinkling of gray in his raven-black hair. He moved and spoke quite like the refined man of the world, but there was far less calm and dignity in his manner than Waldemar Krone had represented to himself, when he thought of the diplomatic and military school through which Secretary Stolpe said he had passed, and the ennobling impress of which the secretary had found wanting in his young friend.

At last came Countess Fransiska, and though the company was small, her entrance had never awakened a greater sensation. Like the spring when it suddenly thaws the winter was at this first moment her radiant look, in comparison with the peevish expression which

this same lovely countenance had shown in the morning to Waldemar Krone. Both the expression of her face and the smartness of her toilet made this comparison striking. She sailed into the room like a swan, and the manner in which she exchanged greetings with the marquis discovered that this was not the first time they had met that day; but as her betrothed, whom she had not immediately noticed, rose from his chair in the window recess, and slowly went forward to meet her, she became actually disconcerted. This was in a higher degree the case than he had looked for, and the scene became so painful that it was a downright relief to him when the marquis stepped hastily forward, offered the countess his arm, and led her in to dinner. The count walked behind with a gloomy mien, and told Waldemar, on the way to the dining-room, that the marquis was an old acquaintance, who on the route from Petersburg to Paris had remained a short time at Copenhagen; thence he was proceeding to Hamburg by Gyldenholdt, where he only proposed spending a day or two. The count thus did not seem aware that his future son-in-law had any suspicion of the marquis having been the object of Fransiska Gyldenholdt's first attachment; or perhaps, by this explanation, he just meant to suggest that this circumstance, being of so delicate a nature, should be ignored as far as possible.

If the count had hoped to be supported by his daughter in this effort he was entirely disappointed. Her bearing during the whole meal-time was uncertain; it undoubtedly discovered a certain effort to draw her betrothed into the conversation, but still it was clear that her eyes and her heart hung on the marquis, and that she listened attentively to every word he said, while she scarcely took time to hear to an end the short replies which Waldemar Krone gave when addressed.

The marquis had manifestly great talent for easy conversation, but it yet seemed that his talent, and, moreover, his patience to-day, were put to a severe test; for Waldemar Krone's short, careless replies, and the calm,

cold tone in which they were given, fell like well-directed blows from a strongly-wielded axe, to crush the light bridges with which the marquis now and again tried to span the gulf between them. It seemed to be the marquis's aim to enter into a sort of friendly relation with the young Danish gentleman, whose phlegm had something in it very annoying to his lively temperament; and it almost appeared as if the countess encouraged the marquis in this attempt, but yet with a certain reserve, as if afraid lest her betrothed should misunderstand her conciliatory tone.

After dinner, Waldemar followed the count into his chamber, while the marquis remained in the drawing-room with the countess. The count, however, seemed nowhere at ease; he went out hurriedly, remained away half an hour, and on his return found Krone on the same spot, with a cigar in his hand, which he had forgotten to light.

"I have introduced the marquis to my sister, the baroness," said he in a bustling manner, not at all usual with him; "he is now with Fransiska in the library, which, as you know, she always likes to show to strangers. I cannot well be with them, as I was obliged to countermand an interview with Sass in the forenoon, and I have some matters which have already during several days been waiting to be attended to; he is coming here in a moment. You should perhaps go up to them in the library, Krone!"

"Do you really think so, my dear father?" asked Waldemar, in a peculiar tone.

"Yes, on my word I think so," replied the count impatiently; "it is not—not polite to the marquis, that both of us run away."

Waldemar rose slowly, and went up stairs. He found the marquis and the countess by the same table, almost on the same spot, where the countess and himself, about a year ago, had spent such a pleasant evening. The scene was the same: the countess's ancestor stared stiffly down from the wall, and opposite stood the marble bust

of the great Louis, in cold, tranquil majesty; but the shades from his grave, which had been too strong for Waldemar Krone, had now in the marquis a descendant and representant. Were they the beams of the setting sun that enveloped the whole scene in a fantastic glory? Before Waldemar Krone's vision there was a mocking life in it all; it seemed to him as if the form of Count Gyldenholdt the First, though it did not leave the canvas, bent reverentially toward the great king's bust, and that a gleam of majestic beneficence passed over the stern features of royalty, as if the two old gentlemen were delighted at the fruit which, by their meeting at Versailles two hundred years before, was now produced for after generations.

The marquis and the countess, however, were not occupied with folios or the great memories of former times; the present moment seemed to engross their whole attention; but their lively conversation was suddenly interrupted by Waldemar Krone's unexpected entrance, and a painful silence ensued.

"Would you not like to play a game at billiards?" asked Waldemar, in French, for of course all conversation with the marquis was carried on in that language; but Waldemar Krone almost seemed, in spite of the gravity of his looks, to have caught sight of the comic side of the situation, and the manner in which he uttered the polite request conveyed the idea—a duel with billiard-cues is certainly a good mode of satisfaction for us two! To the marquis at least one might have been tempted to attribute such a notion; for while the countess withdrew with a look of deprecating violence, he sprang impetuously up, and gave Waldemar a look of which it might be said, as is somewhere to be read, that if the eyes that cast them had been but a double-barreled pistol, the young jaegermester's body would have been riddled through like a sieve. But the French nobleman recovered himself again, and a short game was played in silence; after which sacrifice there was a respite, for the count came with Sass, whose sly counte-

nance showed perfect unconsciousness of the tempest hanging over the heads of all.

The four succeeding days were most exciting and unpleasant; and yet Waldemar Krone found a peculiar bitter satisfaction in provoking the marquis by his cool indifference. He went about with a sort of desperate composure, as the shipwrecked man who sees no help is not afraid of death, but yet would not hurry on the catastrophe which he trusts the elements will bring about in a short time. Deliverance would for him only be the beginning of an empty and sorrowful life.

At last, on the morning of the fifth day, one of the marquis's brilliant lackeys delivered him a note, the contents of which were—not any challenge, but a request for a friendly conference; the marquis was waiting for him by the great fish-pond in the newly laid-out grounds. Waldemar repaired thither immediately, and found his lordship sitting on a bench; he rose, bowed politely, and proposed a turn through the avenue. The marquis's look and his whole behavior was courteous and ingratiating, and Waldemar Krone guessed, that as he had already got a taste of the marquis's military instincts, he should now make acquaintance with his diplomatic talent. He could predict already that this would be a failure; for the subject about which he probably wished to confer had now on the main point become to him indifferent, whereas it seemed to be of the greatest interest to the marquis. The latter began, after a short pause, thus:

“I have requested a conference with you, sir, to make an end of the extremely painful position in which circumstances have placed us both. Are you not also of the opinion that either amiable compromise or open war is preferable to the present position of affairs?”

“May I beg Monsieur le Marquis to explain himself more clearly? What is it that is to be the subject of a friendly compromise or an open strife?”

“As if you did not know who I am, and in what relation I formerly stood toward Countess Fransiska!”

replied the marquis with some heat; but he lowered the pitch of his voice again. "Well, whatever you know or do not know, I shall explain myself quite distinctly. Be it now known that the countess and I long ago cherished a warm feeling of attachment for each other, and I have also to tell you that it was only by an absurd family compact, which had been entered into when I was a child, and on which considerable pecuniary interests depended, that I was compelled to marry one of my cousins instead. This circumstance alone separated the countess and me, and but for it she would long since have been Marquise de Beaufort. We have not the less continued to love each other faithfully. I had promised her, that if it ever became possible for me to do so, I would hasten to her and knit my destiny with hers. As my wife is dead it has now become possible, and I have come to fulfill my promise,—but I find that I unfortunately have come in one respect too late."

"Permit me to remark, M. le Marquis," replied Waldemar Krone, in a self-possessed tone, "you have shown greater hurry in advancing to this point of your story than you actually made in coming to redeem your promise to the countess. You see I wish to treat the matter as considerately as if it did not concern myself in the least. Is it not two years since your lady died?"

"That, sir, however your calculation has been obtained,—is—is true," answered the marquis impatiently. "I must be excused from giving you an account in return of the obstacles which during so long a time have delayed me. I have in this respect given the Countess Fransiska satisfactory explanations."

"Ah, indeed!"

"The countess has, on my inquiry, frankly told me that for a long time she has perceived the impossibility of being able to live with you. Whatever advantages you may possess, you are not congenial to your betrothed. A marriage would make you both unhappy, and she has so significantly discovered this, that in truth

it has surprised her that you have not long ago drawn back."

"You speak quite as if I were courting the countess, and not as if I, as is really the case, were knitted to her by a bond which it will be difficult to loosen. How were you led, may I ask, Monsieur le Marquis de Beaufort, to put these interesting questions to my betrothed?"

"It matters not. I have asked, and she has answered; that is all! She will not marry you; absolutely she will not, and only regard for her father has restrained her from declaring this plainly long ago."

"I have a strong suspicion, M. le Marquis," said Waldemar Krone, after a pause, "that you have corresponded with my betrothed, and that you are here by appointment."

"So you act the spy! That is handsome; well—you have guessed right! I suppressed it in order to avoid any violent scenes with you, but I will not equivocate. Though the correspondence was commenced on my side, my presence here was occasioned by an entreaty from the countess to come over if I really still loved her, and deliver her from the condition of despair in which my long delay had placed her."

"If I only were persuaded of this—that you really love her," said Waldemar Krone in a sorrowful tone. "I can scarcely believe that you have sought her out in this remote corner of the world from unselfish motives merely; your long delay, as you yourself said, must raise such doubts."

"To the business, pray, sir," replied the marquis in a decided tone; "I begged this interview at the countess's own request; I am here with her full consent to decide the matter. She is willing to influence her father to every concession—speaking plainly, to compensation for the expenses you possibly may have had on her account; only she begs you to break off the engagement. This will certainly be most agreeable for you with regard to the judgment of the world, and she does not wish to humiliate you more than is necessary."

"The remains of kindly feeling I still had for Frankska must go the same way as my esteem for her! So you really believe that her efforts were needed to influence her noble, upright father to give me compensation? She has such mean thoughts about her own father that she doubts it! Far from this, it will not be the least vexation which the whole of her heartless conduct will prepare for him, that, if our engagement be broken off, he will not be able to satisfy this craving which his honor imposes on him. Nothing shall induce me to receive any compensation whatsoever."

Somewhat abashed at this reply, the marquis was silent a moment, then he said suddenly:

"Let us cut short this painful scene. You do not love the countess; she is openly quite indifferent toward you; neither do you want her for her fortune; what then is your objection to give her back her troth?"

"I don't care; she must take the first step."

"And your reasons, sir—your reasons?"

"During this interview you have shown me so little regard, M. le Marquis, that I will not explain them to you; they are good and well weighed. Only this much will I say to you, that I have perfectly seen through the countess's aim—and you may tell her so from me. This much I owe to myself, that the responsibility of this breach, and the sad consequences which possibly may result from it, may not be turned over on me. Very true, I no longer love the countess; but the fact that matters stand as they now do is solely her fault. That I should cover her fickleness with the cloak of magnanimity, that is—well—a clever idea, but, as I have said, I see through it. When the countess has given me back my liberty, but not before, I shall let the count know that the breaking off the engagement does not make me unhappy in the manner he may have reason to suppose, and I shall then——"

"What, what *then*?" urged De Beaufort with ill-repressed heat.

"Do my best to insure, sir, that when the union with you is concluded, all possible precautions be taken to secure the welfare of the countess."

The marquis became deadly pale, as Waldemar Krone with the greatest composure uttered these words; it seemed at the moment doubtful if this friendly conference would not yet have a bloody issue, and the marquis had evidently need of all his self-command not to throw the glove he held in his hand right in his rival's face; but most likely he had weighty reasons for avoiding a scandal. Yet he stamped on the ground, and said, in a voice quivering with passion:

"Mr. Krone, do you think I am a coward?"

"It is really impossible for me to know," he was answered with a bland look, slightly approaching to a smile.

"*Mille tonnerres!*" roared the marquis, furious, making a step forward toward Waldemar, who, without moving a muscle, remained standing in quiet observation of his rival's vehement grimace; but the marquis allowed the hand he had already raised to sink, and said, while he clinched it significantly to his side:

"Thank your good fortune, young man, that I have given this same hand to the countess upon it, that in spite of all the insults I might expect from you, this meeting should come to a pacific close. She has more regard for her venerated father than you suppose."

"Now, M. le Marquis," replied Waldemar Krone courteously, "this is the first evidence of respect you have given me since I made your acquaintance. It is perhaps rather indirect, but I comprehend it thus, that you do not doubt my courage. In return I will tell you that a dastardly Frenchman would be a great rarity, and therefore I shall admit that you are no coward. If I have not seized the opportunity, on the other hand, of chastising you for all the insults which your looks have offered me during the last four days, it is simply and alone from regard to the old man whose guests we are, and over whose house you will, perhaps before evening, bring sorrow and disaster."

Thereupon he bowed to the marquis, and went calmly on his way.

"*Sacre !*" swore the marquis, "I think the people in this confounded country are made of ice! It were beneath one to resent their actions," and so he went hurriedly back to the castle.

CHAPTER XVI.

SASS AS COURIER.

THE count had two bell-wires in his room; the one led merely to his servant's chamber, but to the other were fastened five longer wires, severally adapted to set as many bells in motion, namely, one in the old countess's room, one in Countess Fransiska's, one in the housekeeper's, one in the servants' hall, and lastly, there had this summer been added one in the apartments of young jaegermester, his son-in-law prospective. The count had, especially for the last year or two, sometimes had attacks of vertigo or swimming in the head, and this had made his sister so anxious that she had induced him to erect this complicated bell-system, in order that if he felt threatened by his disorder, as sometimes was the case some minutes beforehand, he might, by ringing, secure prompt aid. As to the bell which hung in the jaegermester's chamber, the old baroness had managed, after a little confidential explanation, to get it quietly added among the rest without her brother knowing anything about the matter. Yet this five-toned bell-wire had never been touched, so long as Waldemar Krone had been at Gyldenholdt; so that he had almost forgotten its existence.

He therefore got a terrible fright, when next morning at ten o'clock it suddenly chimed above his head, as he

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sat drinking his coffee; on which, remembering the purpose for which the bell was hung, he ran hastily down to the old count's door, which he found open, and crowded by an alarmed group made up of the baroness, Louise's lady companion, Countess Fransiska's lady's-maid (for, as afterward appeared, the young countess had already gone out to walk), the housekeeper Miss Bensen, and the footman. The old count stood in the midst of the floor, with kindling cheeks and flashing eyes, and seemed to be very far from dizzy; on the contrary, he was in especially energetic possession of his powers of mind and body.

"Are you all out of your senses together?" cried he in wrath. "What do you mean by rushing into my room like a parcel of mad dogs?"

"Herr Greve, your excellency," remonstrated the old housekeeper timidly, "the sick-bell rang."

"The sick-bell! oh—devil take all the bells! Well, well," continued he somewhat appeased, "now I understand it; I have mistaken the bell-handle—so go away, my children, I don't want anything; I only meant to ring for Frands to fetch the jaegermester here.

The jaegermester himself now came forward, and hurriedly entered, while the others retired; but the housekeeper remarked, when the door was well shut, that if the old count at this moment had no swimming in his head, there seemed every likelihood that he would ere long; for such an alteration in his appearance she had never seen during the fifteen years she had served at the castle.

"Shut the door into the passage, Krone," said the count, when they were alone; "come now with me into the bed-room; and shut the door of it, too, so that they can hear nothing, if it should come into their heads to listen. I have sad news for you, my friend. Fransiska was with me a little since, and made me the pleasant announcement that she proposes to break with you. She neither can nor will marry you, she says; but, upon my word, I shall teach her both to can and to will!"

"Alas, dear father, said Waldemar, "it does not come altogether unexpectedly to me!"

"What! are you in collusion with her? Is this a conspiracy against me, after you have drawn me into the whole business in a manner which makes it impossible to draw back with honor? Will you bring shame on me and my house? The whole world is acquainted with our schemes about the entail, and I have even made representations to government. The castle is half built, and it is altogether your work, boy! Krone, Krone, I had not expected this from you!"

"For God's sake, my dear father, try and be a little calm, and do not condemn me before you have heard."

"You are right—my hastiness is wrong! But this is really enough to make the most reasonable man crazy. Speak now, I shall not interrupt you."

"I must then ask you, father, if you have observed in my behavior the smallest sign that I wished to draw back? Have I been careless or inattentive toward you—cold or unkind to Fransiska?"

"No, no," answered the count, in a tone of emotion, "that you certainly have not been; I have got attached to you, Krone, heartily attached, and I will not let you go so readily; I begin to get my wits again. As incredible as it appears, I am yet obliged to believe either in Fransiska's shameful fickleness, or else that the Marquis de Beaufort has a part in the game, though she did not say a word about him. It was with HIM, Krone, that she fell in love seven years ago, when we were at Baden—confound all visits to foreign countries! I will immediately ask her if that is the way of it; I lost my senses fairly when she was here."

The count went hurriedly out, and returned after the lapse of ten minutes.

"I met her in the garden, Krone; look," said the count, pointing out at the window, "there she walks as composedly as if there was nothing the matter. Ah, Lord God, why tookest thou her mother so early thence?"

When the count's emotion had somewhat lessened, he said:

"It is as I thought. She has never loved any one but the marquis, she says, and she did not tell me so this morning, because I terrified her by my violence. She has long been weary of you, she alleges; you have in every respect disappointed her expectations, forsooth! And now that she has seen the marquis again, it is impossible for her to marry any one else, and he is of the same mind, says she. Fine sentiments, very fine sentiments, by my faith!"

"Do you still love Fransiska, Krone?" he vehemently went on; "or whether you love her or not—will you still have her? In that case she shall take thee, or go away poor from this house. Either she shall marry you, or I will disinherit her."

"How can I love her longer, dear father?" was the grave reply. "For the last four months, she has daily, in every way, particularly when you were not present, made me feel her caprice, almost her ill will; but during the last month she has treated me with studied contempt. To force her to marry me, if even there could be any question about doing so, would be a doubtful step on your part. To speak of disinheriting her, and on my account—is so harsh a——"

"In short, you are tired and weary of her, and can give her up to the marquis with right good will!—ha, ha!" laughed the count bitterly. "What did I say to you, Krone, when you begged her hand of me? Do you still remember it?"

"Yes, I remember every word, for I was very soon convinced both of the melancholy truth of your words and of your own kind intention. You rose in my estimation, dear father, and I sank by the same standard. But still you may remember, that from the day the die was cast, and until now, I have done my utmost to make all go well. The very day the marquis arrived, I made a last attempt to conciliate Fransiska; and all this I did, dear father, for your sake rather than mine.

For that I myself should not become happy in marrying her, I have already for some time seen very plainly."

After a pause, during which the count walked impetuously up and down the room, he answered:

"You are right in that too; you are far too good for her; you have your liberty, Krone, and a long life lies before you, which may still bring you happiness. But with me it is the decline of life, and the last days of my old age will be made sad and desolate. Be it so. I shall know to bear my destiny; the world's derision I must endure into the bargain, and to preserve my honor I shall do what I can."

Waldemar conjectured to what these last words pointed; but he would not, by a protest against all compensation, at this moment vex the old man. He accordingly made no answer.

"Do you know what I should do, Krone, if I wished to make Fransiska endure the punishment she deserves? Why, let her have her will, and marry the marquis. I think he is a bad fellow. But he shall leave my house before evening."

"Can I now, dear father, without being misunderstood by you, frankly tell you my opinion? You may comprehend that, after what has passed, I never either can or will marry Fransiska; our engagement is broken off forever; nevertheless, I wish her well, and you still more so, and I am quite agreed with you that we should do her a kindness to save her from the marquis. But knowing her so well as I now do, I am firmly persuaded that she will marry him, in spite, too, of you and the whole world—since she loves him, and he WILL have her. I have observed her during these days, and I never saw a livelier image of passionate love; she is as if bewitched, and Beaufort's power over her is almost painful to witness."

"I should like to know, then, how you would hinder her to marry him? For even if I turn the marquis out of doors, or whatever I do, she may run off after him."

"True; let us then avoid open scandals, dear father! You entertain, as I do, mean thoughts of the marquis, and I have really not discovered, either in his looks or his expressed opinions, any trace of his being a man with a heart. It therefore seems to me unlikely that, after the lapse of so long a time, and while he has been a widower for two whole years, and had his liberty, without taking any notice of Fransiska, he should now suddenly have arrived, urged by the mere force of his passion for her. I have my suspicions that he is speculating on the inheritance Fransiska may derive from you; he is perhaps in debt, and pressed for money,—yes, these are but conjectures, but if now it were so,—and he counted on it, that when Fransiska was once his wife you would not be able to deny anything to your only child. During these miserable days, when I every moment expected the tempest to burst forth, I have thought it all over, and resolved to communicate my distrust to you when the moment arrived."

"Perhaps you are also right in this, Krone; but on my word, the speculation shall bring him no great profit."

"Still it would be a dreadful thing, dear father, to disinherit your only child; do not, for God's sake, go so far! Rather bind up the property firmly, or at least, as long as she lives, secure to her an existence independent of the marquis's grace, if she actually becomes his wife. But it might be possible for us to procure authentic information about the marquis's conduct and pecuniary circumstances, and if these could be placed before Fransiska, her pride would perhaps be roused, and she would herself reject a man who had so shamefully deceived her; for she really believes that he loves her."

"May be, Krone, may be! But such information is not to be obtained in a hurry."

"Still it is possible. He has been a month at Copenhagen. A man of his rank must be well known, for instance, by the members of the French embassy; write

over there, and let the marquis remain quietly here till we receive an answer. Say plainly to Fransiska that I agree with her as to our betrothal being broken off, but that you will give your consent to this only on condition that it shall remain a short time longer a secret that the match is at an end, and that she does not, by any inconsiderate step, discover the true state of matters. Only on this condition will you endure the presence of the marquis till he offers himself; and if I know her rightly she will hope to prepossess you in favor of the marquis and employ the time thus. I will go over immediately to Tiornholm, and remain there some days under pretext of looking after the building and the harvest folks."

After some moments' consideration, the count replied:

"It is indeed my duty to make this attempt, Krone. I think that the idea is good if it be carried out with becoming caution; but it will certainly be vexing to me to see this speculator of a marquis figuring about here for some days longer. Now I wish to ponder the matter: leave me alone; I am almost in a fever from all this mental emotion."

"Farewell, then, dear father!"

"Now, my friend," replied the Lehns greve, much moved, "you and I are not parted forever; we certainly shall not separate in that tone! Ah, my dear son, the whole seems to me like a hideous dream; but I shall dream it on to the last. I am afraid, Krone—and the longer I think of it the more so—that all we do is in vain. He will run off with my child at all events."

The count wiped away a tear from his eyes, lay down on his bed, and begged Waldemar to call for Frands. Shortly afterward Waldemar Krone rode off to Tiornholm, and an hour later, Sass's heavy footsteps sounded on the great stone staircase.

When Sass came into his master's room, the latter was seated writing a letter. As he took off his spectacles and turned toward Sass, the bailiff at once saw that there was something wrong, for he knew his master's face as well as his own account-book. He even guessed

that it was something extraordinary; but still he was far from suspecting the truth, and he became actually terrified when the count made him acquainted with the occurrences of that morning. The count knew his man, and requiring confidential service in the matter, he at once initiated him into the position of affairs. It was some time before Sass could arrive at a full understanding of the whole; but when convinced that it was serious earnest, and that the count was not raving, as at the first moment almost appeared the case, his faithful adherent pronounced, without deliberation, for the simple and radical measure of pitching the marquis out of doors, and immediately fetching back the jaegermester.

"It was only a whim of her ladyship's, and the jaegermester was too sensible a man to leave his bride in the lurch, merely because such a bag of wind as this marquis whistled; the count should see, all would come right again."

The count listened patiently to Sass's outpourings, explained to him yet more clearly how many reasons there were for avoiding alarm or scandal, and communicated to him his determination to allow the marquis to remain quietly, while inquiries were instituted about his conduct and pecuniary circumstances; and it was then possible that the information obtained might bring to reason the person most interested in its correctness.

Sass abandoned his motion for energetic measures, and yielded to the superior advantages of the idea the count had imparted to him. Thus he was at last brought to the point of being all attention and zeal in the service, and the count ended by telling him that as it was both a longer and less effective means to write by post, he wished that Sass himself should proceed to Copenhagen, taking a letter with him to the count's friend, Privy Councillor von Harde, which he must deliver into his excellency's own hands, and receive the answer in like manner. He was earnestly to request his excellency to give this as soon as possible, and, on receiving

it, Sass must instantly return; he might, however, give his excellency all the oral information which the latter could desire. Further, Sass must be away before evening, after letting his wife know that he had gone on an important and private errand for the count to Copenhagen; while he might allow the rest of the folks to remain in the belief that he had gone to Flensburg to visit his relations there, as he did now and then, so that no surprise could be awakened. Lastly, there was *carte blanche* with regard to traveling expenses; Sass was to travel night and day with post-horses.

"For look ye, my dear Sass," said the count in conclusion, "this matter tells on my strength, and I almost think that every day I have to wait for a decision will make me a year older. The matter in doubt is, if I am to keep my child or lose her. I love her more deeply than you or any one may think, nay, than she is herself aware of."

"We shall save her yet, count, we shall certainly save her!"

The count shook his head.

"And to lose *him*, too, Sass! and just when I was beginning rightly to appreciate what I lose in him. If I had only had such a son, Sass!"

Countess Fransiska, immediately on Waldemar Krone's voluntary withdrawal, again showed herself in the full blaze of her loveliness; even as a star which for some time has been veiled in a cloud, when that is past, beams doubly bright. The marquis drew his breath more easily, now that the detested form of Waldemar Krone no longer crossed his path, and they both made repeated but vain attempts to soften the old count's mood. Meanwhile old Sass was flashing like the thunder-god through Funon and Zealand to Copenhagen, which he reached in six and thirty hours after leaving Gyldenholdt.

The morning after his arrival he went to the residence of his excellency the privy councillor, whom he was so fortunate as to find at home; and he obtained imme-

diate access to the mansion, as he judiciously let it be known on whose errand he came. For Privy Councillor von Harde occupied a high post, and his door was not one to open immediately to every one that knocked at it. As to attempts on the part of servants and subordinate officials to get at the letter without taking Sass into the bargain, they failed signally; and shortly afterward Sass found himself in the presence of his excellency in person.

Herr Hofrath Harde had at an earlier period been ambassador at several foreign courts; he had thus spent the greatest portion of his life among foreigners, and was so unacquainted with his native land, and so unaccustomed to speak its language, that no person would at first sight have taken him for a Dane. He knew indeed the history and the laws of his native country, but not its closer characteristics, nor the home usages of its inhabitants. His father had also been a diplomatist. He himself was born at Paris; and as he had spent the greatest part of his life there, returning to visit it whenever he could tear himself free, that city was the only place where he found himself perfectly at home. Count Gyldenholdt had therefore applied to the right man to furnish the desired information, for there was scarcely a man of distinction in France whose character was not known to the privy councillor; but in addition to this, he had made acquaintance with Count Gyldenholdt just when the latter, with his sister and daughter, was at Baden, and was thus aware of the part which the Marquis de Beaufort had played in the Gyldenholdt family during that season at the watering-place. On one of the later visits to foreign countries, the intimacy with the count had been renewed, and in fine, when more recently the privy councillor had removed to Copenhagen, their relation had taken as amicable a footing as was admissible when two such formal gentlemen, particularly at an advanced period of life, become what smaller folks are wont to call good friends. When the count came to Copenhagen, he dined frequently with the privy

councillor, and the latter again with him. They entertained respect for each other, found pleasure in each other's society, and exchanged reminiscences of their travels in foreign countries; but beyond this there was no familiarity or confidence whatever between them. The count knew, however, that the most intimate friends are not always the most silent, and as regarded the privy councillor, he relied unreservedly on his discretion. In such an affair it was a point of honor to be silent, and the Herr Hofrath piqued himself on being a man of honor, above all things, well accustomed to preserve the delicacy of fashion.

It may easily be imagined, that to a Parisian like his excellency, a native Jutlander like Sass was quite in the position of a ship under strange colors. Sass, for his own part, was not in the least embarrassed; he made his blunt reverence, shrewdly rubbed his chin, played with his seals, and surveyed the apartment out of one eye, quite according to his wont. His excellency, on the other hand, was really perplexed, for after reading the count's letter with surprise, he glanced with no less wonder at the ambassador he had sent, and with whom he must discuss a matter of such a delicate nature as regarded his friend Gyldenholdt.

"You are Count Gyldenholdt's steward-of-the-manor?" began his excellency in broken Danish, and with a foreign accent.

"Councillor-attorney Sass, at your service," replied Sass.

"Ah, indeed!" said the privy councillor, raising his eyebrows, as if in some relief to find that there was really a place in the State calendar, however obscure, to legitimize the short, squat, squinting fellow who stood before him.

"May I take the liberty of inquiring if you have been long—a—a—that is, attached to the count's service?"

"What the devil is that to him?" thought Sass to himself; but he answered: "More than forty years,

your excellency, have I been the count's faithful servant and confidential adviser."

"I am glad to hear it, for I am directed to you to obtain such explanations as I may require, and which will be very requisite if I am to accomplish the count's wishes. The letter of my much honored friend is very short; he merely writes that the Marquis de Beaufort has unexpectedly come on a visit to him, and has made his appearance in a manner which makes it very desirable to learn somewhat more intimately what is his character, especially as concerns money matters. His greveship thinks that I shall be able to procure such information, and begs me to do him this service, yet quite privately. He wishes a letter from my hand in answer to this; he begs to be excused from stating in writing his reasons for making me this request. Should I absolutely wish to know them, however, then you have permission to give me every information."

"Just so," said Sass. "The count was somewhat exhausted the morning he wrote, and most probably it was too painful to him to commit this unpleasant matter to paper."

"I will then tell you that the Marquis de Beaufort is well known to me. He has, moreover, recently during his stay here visited at my house, and though no particular friend of mine, I have at one period enjoyed the hospitality of his family, which is one of the richest and most distinguished in France. Though, as I have said, I do not entertain any special personal regard for him, yet I have sufficient reason not to take in hand anything to his injury without very weighty grounds. As the count wishes information about the character of the marquis, given under my own hand, I am tempted to conjecture that this would be used to show to himself, or the like. This might drag me into a matter of an unpleasant character, in which I have no special interest."

"Hm!" thought Sass, "he takes part with the bag of wind; that is a disagreeable discovery."

"Besides," continued his excellency, "though I know

the past history of the marquis quite well, I don't know what he has been about for the last year or two; and as to his pecuniary status, I have no trustworthy information."

"Your excellency," replied Sass, buttoning his coat, as if he would now take the matter seriously, "has already told me a great deal. There has not been, so far as I have remarked, in all that you have said, one word of commendation of the marquis. It would have been so easy, since your excellency knows the past history of the marquis and of his family, to remove the doubt which you may suppose to have risen in the mind of the count by speaking of him in a laudatory style. As this has not been done, I feel still more than ever the necessity of getting to know something on trustworthy authority about this good gentleman, who has fallen like a bomb upon a house where before his arrival all was perfect peace and content. I shall now fully acquaint your excellency with the marquis's relation to the count's family."

When his excellency saw that he could not avoid it, he invited Sass to be seated, sat down himself, and requested the count's courier to begin. Sass immediately composed himself, and that in a style as if he stood before the bar as counsel for the plaintiff; but although he now and then used strong expressions, his story was yet well calculated to fulfill its object. The painful position the count was placed in by the countess having threatened to break with her betrothed (so Sass represented the matter); the distress it would be for the count, in more respects than one, if the engagement with the jaegermester were not carried out; the count's determination never on any consideration to give his consent to a marriage between his daughter and the marquis; his desire, without any bustle or scandal, to prevent this, especially by an unveiling of his true character to cure the countess of her passion, and even if the match with the jaegermester miscarried, still to save her from throwing herself away on a man toward whom

he entertained mistrust; moreover, the grounds for this feeling, both from his former conduct and recent behavior—all this Sass represented, not exactly in elegant language, but with the impress of truth and all the warmth of firm conviction. Only in one point was his representation untrue, for either Sass knew no better, or he thought it suited the rest of his story—he made his excellency believe that all had gone well between the jaegermester and the countess till the moment when the marquis arrived; and he begged him to think what base conduct it was to come to Gyldenholdt under existing circumstances; for as the marquis had previously been the object of the countess's affection, and he, during a whole month's stay in Copenhagen, must absolutely have come to the knowledge that she was now bound to another, he would beyond doubt have stayed away if he had been a man of honor. But, on the contrary, it seemed as if he had just come to cause a breach with Jaegermester Krone; and as the count did not believe in the disinterested love of a man who could act in so unprincipled a fashion, the suspicion had arisen in his mind that the marquis was speculating on the inheritance which would at some period accrue to his daughter; an object which in truth was important enough to tempt the marquis, if he were needy. Therefore it was that the count sought information about the marquis's pecuniary circumstances.

The privy councillor listened with increasing sympathy to this statement, and thought he must indeed trust entirely to Sass's representation of the matter; moreover, he knew the marquis sufficiently well to believe him capable of such a proceeding as was supposed. He knew, in the next place, that the marquis, during the count's stay at Baden, really had stood on a footing of intimacy with the countess; and he could not doubt that so judicious a man as Count Gyldenholdt would never have taken such a step as this, sending a special messenger to him on such an errand, without weighty reasons. He therefore dismissed Sass with the promise

that in the course of the day he would do his best to fulfill the count's request, and begged him to come back again in the evening at eight o'clock.

The privy councillor was on friendly terms with the French ambassador, whom he knew he was tolerably sure to meet at a certain hour in the forenoon on the promenade of Langelinie; it was known to him, in the next place, that De Beaufort, by his haughty bearing during his stay in Copenhagen, had come to be not on the best footing with the ambassador, which was not improved by the circumstance that the latter was an Orleanist, whereas the marquis was a Legitimist, and all his family made no secret of their sympathy with the Count de Chambord. He therefore concluded that it would not be difficult to learn from the ambassador all that the latter could tell. He went accordingly at the proper time of day to take a stroll on Langelinie, where he duly met the ambassador, and led the conversation to touch on the Marquis de Beaufort. He then heard a most characteristic account of his conduct in times by-gone, disclosing a far greater number of details than he knew himself, and certainly revealing things much worse than he had dreamed of; lastly, he received a sketch of De Beaufort's pecuniary circumstances, which considerably surprised him, low as might have been his previous estimate on that point.

The privy councillor was now convinced that it became incumbent on him to give his aid to prevent the marquis from playing a base part; above all, that so honorable a man as Count Gyldenholdt might not sacrifice his only child to a man devoid of principle. At the same time he felt that his interference might prepare for him some unpleasantness, through his acquaintance with the wide-spread family of the marquis, if he went back to France. He therefore resolved on a middle course, and after having written down the information which the count wished, he did not subscribe his name to it. He added in a separate note, that this account was furnished to the count solely on the condition that,

after being shown to the countess, it should be immediately burnt without any other person being allowed to see it, least of all, Beaufort. He set forth the reasons which forbade him to do so mortal an injury to a man with whose family he stood on a friendly footing, and who had never interfered with him; he then concluded with the wish that the count might succeed in bringing this unpleasant matter to an issue satisfactory to him and his.

At eight o'clock precisely Sass appeared, and received his dispatch, which he turned and twisted in his hand before he put in his pocket-book. He evidently expected a short explanation, and got it too, though it was of an unexpected kind.

"Circumstances forbid me, worthy Mr. Councillor," said his excellency, "from further discussing this matter with you. The communications which in this letter I have given to the count are intended solely for himself, and only on condition that it is to be kept secret from the countess that they come from me, are they to be shown her. Only the certainty that I was doing a kindness by it has induced me to expose a man who has never injured me, let him be what he may, whom I have received as guest in my house, and whose family I have known for several years. I must tell you this, councillor, for you might perhaps imagine, since the count has shown you unlimited trust and confidence in this family concern, that he now showed you distrust by henceforward keeping you quite out of the affair. I request of you, as a personal favor to myself, never to hint to any one that you have been with me on this errand; moreover, I believe that you will act in your master's true interests by showing the marquis that deference and respect which, on account of his rank, he is accustomed to enjoy, and which are due to him so long as he is your master's guest. I beg you will give my respectful and cordial greeting to the count, and that you yourself will feel assured of my respect and good will. The count is to be envied!" added his excellency,

with his most amiable smile. "He is in truth served with a fidelity and judgment which does not fall to the lot of many masters, and that is, dear councillor, the only bright side I have been able to discover in this unfortunate affair."

As Sass went down stairs, he thought,—“Hm! It must surely be a black register of sin I carry in my left-hand pocket; but let the great folks keep it to themselves! His excellency is right; it will be an alleviation of the old man’s misery that I keep a fitting distance; and as to what concerns the marquis, I have bowed my back to a scoundrel before, and may well do it once more without lessening myself by it. What his excellency said about the count and me was admirably said, but nothing more than the mere truth. I have served my master faithfully, and not like a mere simpleton either, and Sass shall remain himself to the last!”

As the next day, fortunately, was just the day of the week when the steamboat went to Aarhus, Sass went home by it, and drove the same night to Gyldenholdt. He had been six and thirty hours on the journey to Copenhagen, remained there four and twenty hours, and occupied just other four and twenty hours on the home journey, so that, on the morning of the fourth day, he entered the chamber of the count, whom, contrary to custom, he found in bed, though it was eight o’clock. He delivered the letter and the verbal salutation, and thereupon retired, after the count had thanked him for the speedy and pointed execution of his errand, and begged him now to seek rest and refreshment after so exhausting a trip.

When the count was dressed, he sent for Countess Fransiska. She came instantly, and her countenance gave evidence both of strained expectation and the wish to conciliate her father; for the old man, during the last four days, had not spoken one kind word to her, and she had a presentiment that it would now come to an explanation.

“I have sent for you, Fransiska, to make a last at-

tempt to bring you to reason," began the count, in a tone of emotion. "In spite of all the care and vexation you have caused me by your rupture with Krone, and though I must own to you that the levity of which you have been guilty—in first drawing toward you, and then rejecting, so brave and faithful a man as he has shown himself to be—has given my peace of mind a shock from which it will hardly recover, yet you have it still in your power to procure me some alleviation; and the counsel I will now give you is entirely in your own interests. I do not desire that you should take up matters again with Krone. It would, besides," said the count, with a bitter smile, "be in vain. He would not, indeed, have you, if I could and would give you the whole barony into the bargain. And only from regard to me he has so long forborne with you. But what I desire of you is that you give this marquis his dismissal. You will make yourself unhappy by knitting your fate with his, and your love for him is nothing but a sad, willful blindness, nourished in the course of years by all the exaggerations of fancy."

"Of course!" replied the countess impetuously. "I am no doubt a heartless person, who cannot love any one—as to *that*, Krone has given me to understand it clearly enough. I should like, then, to know if this same brave and faithful man, after all, has not courted my fortune as much as myself? I should like also to know if you will blame me for it as a crime, that in my youth I learnt to know and to love Beaufort, and that entirely with your consent and under your own eyes!"

"You do not know him. What do you know specially about him? What has he been about during the many years in which you have not seen him? Why has he not, during the two years that have elapsed since he became a free man, let himself be heard from? And for what reason does he now come rushing here all of a sudden?"

"All this," answered the countess, with composure,

"he has explained to me quite satisfactorily. I love him. I have never loved any one else but him; and," continued she, with warmth, "if you refuse your consent to our union, then——"

"Ah! What then?"

"Then you may, indeed, cause your only child great sorrow, but that will not shake my resolution. I cannot act otherwise, dear father!" said she, in a milder tone. "You must not now, when, after the lapse of years, I feel happy again for the first time, thrust me from you. You shall yet come to respect and to like François, and all will be right again. He really loves me for my own sake."

"I cannot spare you any longer, Fransiska! You must learn what a man this vile Beaufort is, and I hope it will succeed in curing you of this insane passion. I will then tell you that during the last few days I have made inquiries about him. I have made application at a place where his character was well known; I have received precise information in writing; look, here it is—may I beg you to read *that*?"

"No," answered the countess hastily, stepping back at the same time; "I will not look at it! I know well that Beaufort has enemies, and that they slander him; I have also a conjecture that this is a mean revenge which Krone takes on us. Krone has let fall remarks before François which might lead us to expect as much. If you sent for me only to grieve and hurt me, let me rather go away again."

"Fransiska," said the count, in a voice almost inarticulate with suppressed passion, "either you read at once what is written on that paper, or I go instantly up to Beaufort and order him to quit my house before evening. Be assured that I will keep my word!"

"If you do so," replied the countess, turning deadly pale, "you will chase me away at the same time; I will go with him. Be not less assured that *I* will keep my word!"

There was a moment's deathlike stillness in the room,

and the count saw the gulf open between him and his only child.

"Still, it is all the same," said the countess at last, tearing the paper from her father's hand; "I will submit to anything to prevent scandal! Let me, then, read this libel; it shall not shake my confidence in the truest friend I have ever had."

The countess now read the privy-councillor's notes, but in spite of her loud assertions of security, she changed color several times during the process, and burst into tears when she was done with it.

The information contained in these notes was in substance as follows:

The Marquis de Beaufort from his earliest youth had caused his parents much sorrow from his wild and dissipated life, and brought grief on many innocent girls and respectable families. Nothing had been able to stop him in this ruinous career, and his marriage with his cousin had rather made bad worse, for he treated his wife harshly from the moment her eyes were opened to the life he led, and after she had made one or two efforts to conciliate him. As she was delicate in health, his harshness contributed not a little to hurry on her end, but, nevertheless, her death apparently made no impression on him. However, it seemed that pecuniary difficulties, by which at this period he saw himself surrounded, had for the time brought him to reason. For a few months he led a retired and quiet life, and abstained from gambling, to which he had always been much addicted. The privy councillor's narrative went on to say that his old propensities again got the upper hand, and he began to live in the same manner as before. Although by his father's death he had come into possession of large estates, they one by one were lost, after having been burdened to the uttermost with debt, and he had but one remaining; this certainly was large enough to assure him an independent existence, but its incumbrances prevented him from living in the style suited to his rank, still more from satisfying his dissolute passions. Hard

pressed by creditors, and alarmed by a considerable account and debts of honor, he had suddenly set off to Baden, where he was daily to be met with at the green board. After some alternations of fortune and disaster at play, he had at last made an extraordinarily lucky hit, and won several large sums in succession, when he prudently ceased playing; whereupon, forced to pay his debts in part, and luckily surviving a duel into which a love affair had led him, he went to St. Petersburg, with quite a handsome little capital, to visit his relatives on the mother's side. On his way back from thence he had come to Copenhagen, where he had not made himself remarkable by any striking adventure, though his expensive habits were the same, and it also appeared that his money was on the decline. He had asked a loan from two of his countrymen, and actually received it from one of them; in the next place, he had questioned these same friends in a stringent manner about the Gyldeholdt family, and had at last departed, according to his own declaration, direct for Paris.

When the countess had read this account of the beloved François, which was drawn up in French, she rose impetuously, burst into tears, and exclaimed:

"This is a disgraceful tissue of truth and falsehood! Do not think that it will separate me from François! Much of it he has himself told me. He has swerved from the right path, for we are all fallible beings; but the principal cause of his going wrong was his being obliged to marry a woman he did not love; this gave an unhappy bias to his life. True, indeed, he has been somewhat late in returning for me, but yet he has come, and cruel would it be to cast him off. If he is poor and unfortunate, that only makes him so much the dearer, and I am proud of the trust he has shown me. If you have ever loved me at all, father, give your consent to our union, and help to put François's affairs on a right footing."

As her father gave no answer, she hastily went her way; and an anxious ashen-gray shadow spread over

the features of the old man as the door closed behind her. But after an hour or two of violent agitation, he had taken his resolve, and regained his old self-possession.

Just as he arrived at that point the marquis entered, and after a short but fitting preface, he began an explanation of his conduct to the countess, which gave the count an idea of his great talent for winning regard when he wished it. In spite of the count's mean opinion of him, and his exasperation at his presumption, he became for a moment wavering in his resolution, and the idea pressed itself on him that the representation of the privy councillor might possibly be exaggerated and one-sided. The marquis concluded by formally asking for the hand of the countess, and called attention to the fact that just on account of the painful circumstances which had recently occurred, a speedy union was desirable.

The count was very sparing of words; he begged him in an abrupt manner to leave him alone to think over the matter, saying that then he should hear further from him.

The old count perceived that it would be in vain to resist, that it would only bring increased scandal on his house, if he had recourse to violent measures. In the next place, he saw that his daughter was so blinded, no attempt to gain time and defer the engagement would lead to anything. This might have been tried if the privy councillor's information had not been procured and communicated to the countess; but now, by this energetic attempt to step between her and the marquis, she was driven to an extremity of stubbornness which made her quite inaccessible to reason. This step, however prudent it had then appeared to him, seemed just to have brought on the catastrophe; and singularly enough, the marquis himself could not have found out anything which would have better furthered his views. This result was obvious to the sorrowful count and the dismayed Sass. They thought, with reason, that if the

heart of man is an enigma, the heart of woman is sometimes an entirely insoluble one.

Meanwhile, as the count had now resolved to take the matter as it was, some tranquilizing sides in it discovered themselves to him. So much he had now ascertained with certainty, that his daughter really loved the marquis, and however much grief her obstinacy had caused to himself, still this characteristic of hers was a good protection against a husband's tyranny. He felt persuaded that if a stormy future awaited her, she would not founder or become an object for the world's contempt. She would not bow her neck under the yoke, or lose heart because her eyes became at last opened; she might perhaps be unhappy, but would not let the world see it. And here he was seized again by the painful consciousness, that she was lost to him and to his family; for he felt convinced that if she really suffered shipwreck, she would scarcely, like the castaway, turn back to her father's home to become an object of compassion.

What the count had now to do was to secure her an existence independent of the marquis's favor. The noble suitor was accordingly forced to undergo a somewhat unpleasant cross-examination; but thanks to the privy councillor's information, he had been sufficiently put on his guard by the countess, and he perceived that an amiable frankness would be here the most judicious course of proceeding. The count's inquiry, if he had not some hope of resuming the diplomatic career on which he had entered in his youth, was answered in the negative. He would not thus sully his own or his family's fidelity to the old royal dynasty, and since, in 1830, a usurper had ascended the throne of France, every hope of being able to enter the service of the State was annihilated; in short, such a step as to attempt conciliating this king of a rabble would embroil him forever with his whole family.

Eight days was spent in completing all necessary arrangements. The count secured his daughter a yearly income of 5000 dalers, and gave her a dowry of 50,000;

he gave no hint of what he intended to do with the rest of his private fortune, and signified both to the marquis and his daughter that every request for support in future would be positively refused. Beaufort treated the pecuniary part of the business with amiable easiness. Although he had openly confessed the great diminution his means had suffered since his father's death, yet he would not allow that the property he still retained was not perfectly sufficient to maintain himself and his lady according to their rank. This assertion, marvelous to say, was quite true; his income was still enough to admit of considerable expenditure if the countess's dowry were applied to pay the remaining debt, and a rational economy were observed in time coming; but it might be predicted with tolerable certainty, and the marquis himself felt confident, that neither of these conditions would be observed.

The marquis had in his day been really more captivated by the countess than by any other lady he had ever known in his life, and their number, unfortunately for them, was not small. She had become older, and the youthful freshness of sixteen had given place to greater maturity; yet the countess was still so handsome, elegant, and engaging, that really something that resembled love again blazed up in his withered heart. He knew but too well that of the ladies with whom he was acquainted in his native land, and with whom he could unite himself without making a *mésalliance*, there was scarcely one who would venture the experiment of trusting herself and her happiness in his hands; such had become his character at home. Certainly people would open their eyes when he now returned with so fair and rich a bride, who was also of so old a family; for nobility was still nobility, even when it came from the land which, to the Parisians, was included in the notion of Ultima Thule. Lastly, he had now got a nice additional income, quite a considerable loose capital, as well as the prospect of a rich inheritance. He did not doubt that the count at last, and especially if there were

children, would become more liberal, and he deliberated with himself if it would not be advisable, so long as the count lived, to adopt a quieter domestic life himself. It would be a sacrifice, but with a wife of so lively and intellectual a disposition perhaps he could endure it for some time, and he thus felt disposed to make his future wife's life pleasant if she would only in some measure let him have his liberty.

In the heart of the countess all was sunshine and gladness; she showed herself during these eight days more kind-hearted and sympathetic than at any other time, either before or after. It still did her old father good to see her so happy, and a faint hope of a better future began to dawn on him. What specially won the old man's heart again toward her was a step she took which he had not at all expected. In spite of her levity, her egotism, and her worldly mode of thinking, Countess Fransiska was not vindictive; however mingled they might be, some kindly feelings were to be found in her heart; and now, when she was allowed to have her will, when the wound which her unhappy love had kept open for so many years was closed at last, the good in her nature came into play for a time. She wrote a letter to Waldemar Krone, in which she informed him of her engagement with the marquis, and begged him to forgive her the mistake she had committed in ever becoming unfaithful to her first love, still more by thus wronging HIM. It was yet a happiness for them both that their betrothal had been broken off in time, and she also hoped that her father would by degrees become reconciled to the existing state of matters. She begged him to forget every unkind word she had ever said to him, and specially she entreated him to think of François Beaufort without indignation. Her future husband, who was so cruelly misunderstood by Krone and others, joined her in kind regards, and they both wished him all possible happiness in the time to come.

When Waldemar Krone, after the departure of the countess, received and read this letter, he had first talked

with Sass, who gave him a minute account of all that had passed, and did not scruple to communicate to him some expressions which had escaped the count, and which had given him an idea of what had been the nature of the privy councillor's information. While it pleased Waldemar to see this evidence of better feeling in his quondam betrothed, he felt convinced that if ever he had judged a man correctly it was the Marquis de Beaufort; and he pitied Fransiska Gyldenholdt from the bottom of his heart.

The gossip had now become extraordinary over the whole country-side, where the amazement at what had taken place at Gyldenholdt, which it was impossible long to keep secret, was of course boundless. The sensation was yet greater at Dyrland, whose inhabitants kept quite aloof from the castle in those days. The individual least surprised was the Countess Adelaide; she was very glad, for Krone's sake, at this close of the drama; and when her cousin was severely handled by the rest, she for the first time entered on her defense.

The count found it desirable under present circumstances to leave home for some time; and however small his liking for it, he undertook his fourth and last visit to foreign lands, closely recommending his sister to Dr. Goldschmidt's care. The old baroness was indeed, of all at Gyldenholdt, the most distressed by these events, and her worthy medical adviser sought in vain to persuade her that the marquis was a hero who had delivered her niece from a miserable existence and a *mésalliance*. The doctor had with admirable ease assumed this new tone, as he observed from what quarter the wind blew; and if he had really been scandalized by such occurrences as we have related, only the mirror in his own room had witnessed the demonstration of his feelings.

The count accompanied his daughter and her betrothed to Paris, where the marriage took place as quietly as possible. The day following he set off on his further travels, obstinate against all persuasions to a longer stay. When he returned to Gyldenholdt, he went about

as usual, and people said that there was no change in him, much admiring his powers of mind and body at a time of life so advanced; but those who knew him better, and were daily round him, were of another opinion. It was impossible to say whether anything had occurred on the journey to Paris, arousing fresh anxieties for his daughter's happiness; or if he only continued to brood on his vexation at the abrupt overthrow of every scheme for the future, once his absorbing object, now but a mark for the world's derision, nay, specially made the jest of his own relatives, whom Countess Fransiska had always treated with a certain haughtiness, and who now revenged themselves by unsparing criticism on her proceedings. The deeper causes of regret might perhaps render him morbidly sensitive on the subject; but whatever was the reason, so much is certain, that he never thereafter mentioned his daughter or Beaufort, nor, if able to avoid it, would hear their very names; even discovering no satisfaction when it was communicated to him that an heir to their union was expected. Sass remarked in his master a distraction and absence of mind of which no traces had ever before been visible; and when he saw the old man go about so silent and gloomy, he doubtfully shook his head.

Waldemar Krone, to the surprise of all, shortly after the count's return from Paris, came to Gyldenholdt, and had an interview with the count in Sass's presence. The bailiff mentioned this to Count Wilhelm the next time they met together.

"You should have seen your uncle's state, Herr Wilhelm, when Krone entered, and they met for the first time after the ugly doings which parted them! I am not myself given to tears, but I could almost weep to think of the miserable exchange the countess has made, by running off with that French bag of wind. If I could hang that marquis on the highest tree in the forest, I would do it!"

"But what did uncle specially want with Krone?" asked Count Wilhelm.

"Well, just to decide that woeful compensation question. The mansion at Tiornholm, you know, count, is even as it now stands absurdly expensive; but the jaegermester was not to be induced to receive a single farthing; he mentioned that if he contented himself with the cellars and ground-floor already erected, and instead of building another story put the roof on now, the building would afford a spacious, but by no means extravagantly fine, residence for the proprietor of Tiornholm. He is the true stuff, sir, is the young jaegermester—sound to the core of the timber! I got the old man coaxed to reason by observing to him that he might remember the jaegermester in his will; and so he let the matter rest for the present.

"Yes," Sass concluded with a grunt, "now we must prepare a new will, and that under present circumstances is a painful business."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE TEMPTER.

DURING the next three months Waldemar Krone lived a lonely and melancholy life at Tiornholm. What did he propose, and what were his plans for the future? This question his friends now and then discussed, and the whole country-side occupied themselves about him more than he knew. It was said that he went about in the woods and along the shore whole days with his gun under his arm, not heeding wind or rain, and that his appearance was so dejected that it would not surprise people if they heard some fine day that he had made away with himself. A shade of discomfort rested over the mansion and its environs, which were avoided by all strangers. Both Count Wilhelm and Pastor Kortsen

made attempts to draw Krone back to their society, but without success. They each visited him alone, and without concert, yet urged by the same motive; they found him calm, indifferent, almost stupid, and quite inaccessible to sympathy and enlivenment.

In truth, there was darkness in his heart, and he shunned the light. When the excitement was over, which, during the marquis's visit, had kept him erect, he sank into gloomy reveries, during which he again and again weighed himself and his past life, and found both wanting. He scourged himself with a certain satisfaction, and the evil spirits were near him, for his wounded vanity rose again and filled his soul with bitterness and defiance.

Swiftly and easily he had thought to climb to the summit of happiness, but as abruptly had he fallen down again; nevertheless his fall had not been sublime enough to deserve the name of tragic. His late uncle had made the first essay to insinuate himself into the domains of the great nobility, and had been rejected with contempt; however, the representative of the older generation had borne his defeat with grace, while his experience had been of use to the younger scion. Thanks to his uncle's wise counsels and Hans's well-meant cautions, every appearance of presumption was avoided; and the other rock, the ill will of the councillor—formerly Brodstrup, now Sass—was successfully cleared. Krone, junior, had come very near the mark, and he had forged the golden links with great prudence, yet suddenly they broke, and he fell—not indeed before a councillor's ill will, but a French marquis's rivalry. The result was still the same, and there stood the half-built castle as a monument of the still-born Von Krone and Gyldenholdt entail, which might witness to posterity how difficult to the Krones had been the great art of making a match. The world had been his god, and it now became also his judge; he could imagine how tenderly the Copennagen folks pitied poor young Krone, and how musically the passing-bells in all the temples of gossip tolled the knell of his departed honor.

Yet this was only a secondary matter; he did not wish to have anything more to do with the world, and all thoughts of ambition were now loathsome to him. The nobler and higher aspirations of his early youth were now stifled; he had acquired no special profession, and his uncle had happily dissuaded him from the insipid notion of devoting himself to literature as an author. On the other hand, he had saved Tiornholm estate from the shipwreck, though, sure enough, thanks to the castle, somewhat burdened with debt; in the next place, his title of jaegermester, the most essential requisite for sailing down life's stream as a fashionable good-for-nothing, was therefore still present. Was there anything else to be done but to commence the voyage? The world was large; he could still flee hence, and leave his reputation behind him.

His bright moments in these days were few. When he thought of Ida it was with the pain of hopelessness; he had certainly thrown away his happiness for life! Was it such a certain matter that she had loved him, and was it probable, that even if this had been the case, she would care for him still? Could she ever regain the lost confidence in him? No, here too all was dark; he must strive to forget, and again to forget.

At last he awoke from his trance and took a resolution. In the month of December he made all necessary arrangements for a long journey, and intrusted Sass with the management of his affairs. He only made one visit of leave-taking, namely, to the old count; he dismissed Niels, and traveled to Germany by way of Hamburg.

The only person who made any objection to his master's journey was Niels. The jaegermester had in his days of misfortune become far more considerate and easier to please than before, and Niels had really got attached to him. Father Hans's fidelity had after all been inherited by his son, and the latter would gladly have followed his master to the world's end. He therefore accepted the situation Sass had procured for him at Gyldenholdt, and did not give up the hope that the

master would yet come back again some day to marry another countess. What impression the change in the jaegermester's destiny made on old Hans may be easily imagined. He wrote a most abusive letter to Niels, and under cover of some decorum to the master, furiously blamed both for having mismanaged the whole affair. Niels replied in a tenor quite proportioned to this vehemence—it must be said very undutifully; he bade his father mind his own business, and added, that he could almost swear to it that the marquis was the Evil One in bodily form.

Waldemar Krone set off, and an unseen tempter accompanied him on the road. It was a dangerous turning-point in his life; and if he had continued to listen to the sinister voice which whispered to him to forget indeed, and carelessly to pluck the roses he might yet find in his path, if he had plunged into debauchery, and sunk in that abyss, he would but have been taken in a snare which has caught many before him. His better nature conquered however; and after a short stay at one of the great watering-places, where recklessness has its headquarters, he parted from the crowd, to begin an aimless ramble on foot through Switzerland.

The farther he got from home, with greater strength awoke his passion for Ida; her lovely and pure image stood more and more clearly before his inner sight, and it was this star which led him away from the abyss; but he now also felt doubly the weight of his misfortune. Self-reproach, longing, disappointment, followed him everywhere, and sorrow printed deep furrows in his brow. In spite of the inclement season of the year, he walked many miles on foot, and these bodily exertions were an alleviation of his misery. No danger dismayed him, and no mountain, which human foot could tread, was too steep for him. His hardy guides regarded him at times with doubtful looks, as if they feared he was not quite in his senses, or else that some grief had made him weary of life.

After he had thus during four months exhausted his

body, without procuring rest for his mind, he at last took up his abode in one of the pleasant green valleys of Switzerland. One evening, as he sat there beside a brook filled by the rain with foaming water, and whose course between shrubs and rocks he felt a melancholy pleasure in observing, gentler emotions came upon him; for the first time during a long period, they welled up and overflowed in his heart.

It was quite still; the sun set gloriously, and the blue mountain-breasts glowed with a purple sheen into the whiteness on their peaks. That sight, perhaps the most beautiful this earth has to show to mortal eyes—the meeting of the snow-covered summits with the clear blue heavens—he had now often contemplated with indifference; but this evening the beauty of nature awoke a strange gladness in his soul. It came like the still glorious evening itself, as a gift from heaven—as an angel of consolation, whose path was indeed trackless, but whose presence he felt enter his heart. For the first time in his distress he wept, and for the first time his soul sought refuge in earnest prayer to God. It was as if he were being prepared for what awaited him; for when he came home he found rescue, and that in the form of a letter

CHAPTER XVIII.

RESCUE.

ABOUT a fortnight before hope had thus revived again in Waldemar Krone's wearied soul, Baron Malte and Frank sat together in one of the apartments in the Royal Hotel at Copenhagen. It was in the month of April, and the baron, who was now married, and lived happily with his wife at Soborg, was spending a few days in town. He had begged his friend Frank to dine

with him, and now, after the meal was over, they sat at coffee and talked about old times.

"What can have become of Krone?" asked the baron.
"How sorry I am for him, Frank!"

"I must own that he has been severely punished, and if I only knew that he bore his misfortune in a right way I should feel more friendship for him than I have done for a long time."

"I am glad to hear that, my dear fellow! Your friendship with Krone has always appeared to me like a solid but empty house which has been quitted by the old tenant, while the new one has not yet moved into it. Now he stands in need of us, and we must do something for him."

"With pleasure; but what can we do?"

"Much, perhaps, and that not for him merely. I have been at Stromby, Frank, and made the acquaintance of your friends there; it gladdened me heartily to get to know Ida Stainforth, but it cut me to the heart to see how little she now answers in one respect to the first description I heard of her. The face is the same, indeed, and the form—but like a sculptor's model of them—the animation is wanting. My wife says, too, that she has really faded to an alarming degree; and she is persuaded that Ida still loves Krone, and pines away over it. Adelaide mentioned this to Mrs. Bruun, who quite agreed with her; she said that Ida had struggled bravely, but it was to be feared she must succumb at last."

"Blighted love seldom kills, is an old saying," sentimentously remarked the student, though with ill-concealed doubt as to the validity of the maxim.

"Seldom, but yet it does sometimes happen," returned Von Malte, whose knowledge of the world qualified him better to pronounce on the question. "I must tell you, too, that we have received one letter from Krone. Count Wilhelm wrote to him, and, contrary to expectation, got an answer. Krone's letter was very sad, and he seems to have given up every hope of happiness. I have read it myself, and one expression struck me. It was in re-

ply to Count Wilhelm's suggestion that he should return home, and begin a new and happy life at Tiornholm by seeking a wife in his own country. It runs thus in the letter: 'I shall never come back, my dear count, and I think seriously of selling Tiornholm; there is in Denmark but one girl whose affections I prized when leaving it, and though more precious now than ever, yet if at any time they were in my reach, I have, alas! forfeited them irrevocably.' We are all agreed that by this one girl he could only have meant Ida Stainforth; if they really love one another, let us make an attempt to bring them together."

"It is a doubtful matter," replied Frank somewhat coldly, "to interfere in other people's love affairs."

"But this is not a common case, and I have got an idea which I will impart to you. I think that Krone should be written to, but that no one but you can undertake such a charge. He has still much confidence in you, and an unexpected cordial proffer of renewed friendship on your part will deepen the impression. Write bluntly to him, and inform him that he might be better employed than in rambling idly, alone and unhappy, through foreign lands."

Frank did not feel much inclination to write, and some of the old bitterness awoke in his heart; but the baron was able to remove his scruples, and at last he resolved to comply. Frank discharged his commission, not in a sentimental fashion, but after a very decided one of his own; he explained briefly the whole affair, and did not omit to add that the worst thing he, Waldemar Krone, could do, was of course to think of marrying Ida from compassion. If, on the other hand, his friends' conjectures about the state of his feelings were correct, then he should lose no time.

It was this letter which awaited Waldemar Krone that evening in Switzerland, and it shook him deeply; for indeed he would have given everything to win Ida. But what if his friends had now mistaken her feelings, and this last and bitterest disappointment should be his?

Still it was best to look truth in the face, and at once he determined in what way he would write.

His letter contained a confession only fitting the perusal of one human being, and which even Ida would only fully understand, if she really loved him. For the first time in his life he humbled himself thoroughly, and though nothing else but love could have dictated what he wrote, there was not a word about love itself in the letter.

Ida and Frederica sat together in their little parlor in Stromby; Ida played the accompaniment, and Frederica sang one of Weyse's evening songs.

"This one," said Ida, "the little ones will easily be able to learn. Fond as they are of their singing exercises, I almost think they gladden me still more! Can there be anything more charming, Frederica, than a chorus of children's voices?"

Frederica assented, but the tears came in her eyes at hearing her poor sister talk of gladness, while day by day she became sadder to see. The news of what had befallen Krone in the previous autumn had shaken the self-control which Ida, with such a sore struggle, had attained. The old wound was torn open again; she had been more tranquil when her fate seemed irrevocably sealed. In spite of all resistance, argue as she might, there was now revived out of past longings a hope which her reason condemned; and she suffered doubly under this renewed inner strife.

How often had Frederica felt the wish to win her sister's confidence, so as to be able to console and cheer her; but every attempt to learn what pressed so hard on her had been gently but firmly withstood. At this moment Frederica felt an inward impulse to fall on her sister's neck and tell her that she could no longer keep silence, and that she had long ago penetrated her secret. She would indeed have done it if, at the same moment, the door had not opened, and worthy old Brask entered the room.

"Good news!" exclaimed Brask in high glee. "I

have certainly got something nice for Miss Ida. Are any of the family abroad—a rich uncle, say, for example—whose heir you might be? Hey, hey! Here you shall see,” continued he, drawing forth his huge pocket-book, and producing from it a thick letter, “plenty of postage stamps; I almost think it has come from Geneva.”

Ida, amazed, took the letter; and Frederica, too, came hastily forward to see how any missive could look after traveling so far. The address was in French, and they both gazed some moments at the enigmatical envelope, when Ida’s hand began to shake, and she dropped the letter on the floor. Frederica took it up, and begged her to open it and read it; but she suddenly became aware that her sister was deadly pale, then glowing red, then pale again. Ida seized the letter hastily, ran up stairs to her own room, and locked herself in.

After some instants of dumb surprise, Frederica ran after her and knocked at the door.

“Let me come in, and that instantly, Ida! She was looking exactly,” said the younger girl to herself, “as if she would faint next moment.” Ida gave no answer, but Frederica, with no small relief of mind, could hear her sob.

“Ida,” called out she, “if you do not open the door, I’ll call Brask, and we’ll break it open!”

“Oh, dear Frederica,” replied Ida in an unsteady and beseeching voice, “only let me be a few minutes alone.”

“I want to know from whom that dreadful letter has come; I won’t go away till you have told me.”

“It is from him—from Krone!”

“Now, now—ah, God be thanked!” exclaimed Frederica, clapping her hands, and running hastily down stairs again. Brask was still in the parlor, and it seemed as if he meant to take a good rest there, for he had seated himself at the window with a book; yet he put some questions to Frederica about the letter, which were not answered. Frederica measured the floor with short,

quick steps, but suddenly stopped before Brask's chair and bawled into his ear:

"Brask, my good, dear, kind old friend! will you do me a favor?"

"Yes, God knows that I will; TEN if you wish it!" answered Brask, jumping up with great energy.

"Then go away just now, for Ida and I have got something of importance to speak about; but you won't be offended with me, surely?"

"Not in the least; I quite understand—the letter!" said Brask, pointing upward with his forefinger. "What a thing the post is, after all! Was it, then, any special good news?"

"Perhaps—perhaps," answered Frederica, running out of the room again; and Brask took up his hat and went his way. Frederica was now admitted into the garret, and immediately saw that Ida had been the prey of the strongest agitation.

"I am dying of curiosity, Ida! Tell me what Krone has written to you."

"Come here to me, my own little sister! Sit with me a little, and let me rest my head upon your breast; I am very happy, but I am also very tired."

"Your hand shakes so; now, you must not go and turn ill. Ah dear, sweet Ida! why have you been so reserved, and not had the least confidence in me? Do you not think that I have long since seen through the secret? You would have done better to have opened your heart to me."

"If I had done so, I could not have borne my sorrow at all; rather than plague you with all my distress, my longing, and my bad dreams, I must have gone far away and earned my bread among strangers."

"How could you still hold out, and bear your sorrow alone? You have loved Krone steadily, you love him still, and at last, at last you will be his?"

"No, Frederica, there is no talk about love at all; this is not a proposal of marriage. Thank God, Frederica, he has more respect for me than that!"

"What in all the world does this wonderful letter contain, that is so full of respect?"

"The letter no one shall see—not even mother."

"You are a real obstinate little old thing, Ida."

"You **MUST** understand me rightly, Frederica! Do not you know that Waldemar long since, perhaps unintentionally, awakened hopes in my mind which were bitterly disappointed? I saw that he did not love me, and how could I now, after he has been separated from his betrothed, not by his own free choice, but by unexpected circumstances,—she having, as I hear, broken off with him,—how could I have rejoiced over it, if he had at once offered himself to me? It would really not have gladdened me so much as it would have offended me."

"Yes, yes; though he has not done so yet, it will come time enough."

"That I don't know; he has written to me, as in the old days, as a brother to a sister. He is unhappy, without relatives or friends to whom he can freely open his mind; he has traveled far without finding rest; more and more he perceived that there is but one single individual in which he feels such confidence that he can fully reveal his inmost feelings,—it is to—to **ME**, Frederica!" said Ida, her eyes sparkling, and her cheeks glowing.

"Therefore must what he has written," continued she, "remain entirely between him and me. He judges himself in this letter so severely, and in the same degree so overestimates me, that I have a double reason for letting no one read it. Only this much will I tell you, Frederica, that he speaks gently and sympathizingly about his former betrothed; he confesses to me, that if Fransiska Gyldenholdt had been as good and as kind as she was handsome and attractive, then he might perhaps have been happy by her side; but now, her heartlessness to him has extinguished every spark of love on his part."

"That confession I don't like at all, dear Ida."

"Yes, indeed! How well he knows me! God be

praised for every word in that dear letter; it speaks the honest, warm language of truth. His heart lies open before me like a book, Frederica! Now I understand it all; it was natural, almost unavoidable, that he was drawn away from me, whom he did not regard in that way; it seems to me a marvel that he returns to me. But I do not merely say, God be thanked that he comes—but also and especially—that he comes back thus!”

“There, you yourself tell that the letter has more significance than at first you would admit.”

“Yes, he begs me to answer it immediately, and let him know if he may write to me again and pour out his heart to me. My happiness is almost too great and overwhelming. Do you really believe it will last? Will not this too disappear like a dream?”

“No, no!” exclaimed Frederica, throwing her arms round Ida’s neck and kissing her; “assuredly it will not. You shall see that the sorrow is now all over, and my own dear little sister will be as happy as the day is long. It was time it came, Ida!”

Shortly afterward Mrs. Stainforth came home, and she was exceedingly surprised at what Frederica had to tell her. She immediately went up to Ida and had a long and confidential conversation with her, and though she expressed her satisfaction sparingly, yet they remarked that now for the first time for a long season she looked cheerful. Clara Bruun was also soon informed of what had taken place, and we may imagine her delight.

It was no easy task for Ida to answer Waldemar, for her heart was so full, and his letter did not permit free vent to be given to all its feelings; but she executed it in a manner which only a mind pure as hers, and a heart so tender, could achieve. When Waldemar had received and read her simple, clear, and cordial epistle, he was deeply moved, not merely by love, but by reverence; he recognized that it is given to few to win a heart like Ida’s, and he trembled at the thought of how very near he had been to lose it.

Of course the correspondence ended here; he instantly packed up, bade farewell to the pleasant green valley in whose bosom he had found again the clew to his paradise, and to the venerable snow-covered mountains which had been the silent witnesses of his pain, his anxiety, and his nameless joys. He journeyed by the shortest road back to Denmark, only remaining a few hours in Copenhagen, and these he employed in an interview with Frank, in which they opened their hearts to each other, and anew laid the foundation of a real and lasting friendship. The house of their former association, to use Baron Malte's phrase, no longer stood unoccupied.

Suddenly it was noised abroad in Stromby that Jaegermester Krone had come to the town, and that, after dismounting at the inn, he immediately repaired to Mrs. Stainforth's abode. During two days the good people of the town were kept in suspense as to the purport of this visit; but on the third the jaegermester appeared on the public promenade with Miss Ida Stainforth on his arm, and people got an opportunity of seeing—what was well worth a glance—the handsomest couple in Stromby, and two as happy faces as ever the sun cast his beams upon.

The newly betrothed pair were shamefully remiss in visits, and great offense on this account was taken by some. Mrs. Bek, of course, did not neglect to express her opinion; for nothing that happened at Stromby was properly managed unless she had stamped it with her sanction, in so far as she was the city inquisitor regarding news. Thus she observed, "Now and then miracles do occur in this strange world, but when they do, it is almost always to such simple folks as the Stainforths," and perhaps the worthy lady uttered a deeper truth than she knew.

These were glorious days for Ida and her dear friends, and the past year seemed to them like an uneasy dream; but that it had been no dream, they were reminded as they stood by the grave of Captain Stainforth, looking on the grass which whispered so emphatically of realities

past and to come. There was so much seriousness in the first moments of returning happiness, both with Waldemar and Ida, that it gave to their whole intercourse a peculiar quietness very unusual with those newly plighted to each other; but Clara Bruun said it was just a good omen. It was Bruun who most enlivened the circle, and his whole face laughed every time he came to Stromby and saw Waldemar and Ida together. Brask, on the other hand, had slight attacks of melancholy, for he feared that there stood before him a separation from the whole Stainforth family. None of the captain's survivors, at any time, however, forgot Brask, and he received in time to come many clear tokens of how highly they all esteemed his faithful friendship.

We need scarcely add that Ida, in spite of her happiness, felt sad at parting with her little school. She sought out an efficient teacher to secure its continuance, charged Clara Bruun to have an eye to it, and paid every year for the instruction of some poor children there.

Half a year afterward, the new mansion at Tiornholm was transformed from a half-built castle into a pleasant, substantial, spacious country-house. It stood under the shelter of venerable oaks, surrounded by fragrant flower-beds and extensive lawns; while the sea urged its waves against the neighboring beach, a lively image of Time, which quietly, yet unceasingly, rolls forward, and, without hurrying or lingering, brings the children of Time, the happy as well as the unhappy, to the haven appointed.

It was an evening in the month of October; the sun had gone down, and the clear moonlight gave the garden a fairy-like loveliness. All was repose within; pearl-drops of dew adorned each flower and blade of grass, and no track was yet to be seen on the well-kept walks. The garden-door opened, and Waldemar and Ida stepped in together; leaving behind for a little the fire-lit glow and cheerful stir of the house. They were now man and wife, and just this evening had reached their new home.

He put his arm round her, and thus they walked silently round the extensive lawn, while in mute transport she contemplated the house under whose roof her brightest dreams should become realities. He led her to a bench, from which they could look out over the sea, whose waves gleamed pleasantly in the moonlight. Here they sat down, and he talked to her. What did they talk about? About their recollections of childhood. Now she could enjoy them! The angel with the sword was gone away, and the garden of paradise open. Now he went by her side through memory's pleasant grove, and interpreted much which had lain in her mind as vague misgivings. Her own life became a beautiful romance, yet hiding in its bosom the deepest truth. Who could talk like him so musically, so heartily, yet so truthfully? It sounded like a poem, and yet it was far more.

But the waves rolled silently toward the shore, the minutes ran into the ocean of eternity, and soon even this entrancing hour was but a memory.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CASTAWAY.

MEANWHILE the fate of the Marquise de Beaufort had been most melancholy, and her father's worst fears had been realized. The marquis was only able to endure for a short time the tranquil life at her side, and his old passions again quite mastered him. All that he had got, and, moreover, was to get, as yearly income from Gyldenholdt, went to the green board, and the misery increased daily. At first the marquise submitted to it; next she remonstrated, and at last she overwhelmed him with reproaches. He avoided her society

more and more, and at last left her entirely, allowing her to live alone in the desolate castle in Normandy, the revenues of which his creditors had at last also arrested; so that she was there only a tolerated guest.

It was a bitter cup which Fransiska had to drain ! Before it came so far as this she had been forced to endure many humiliations. She soon discovered how little respected her husband was among his equals, and his relatives received her in a cold and haughty fashion. She would not bend to them, and it ended in a complete breach. Her own compatriots, whom she now and then met in Paris, she avoided more and more; and now, bearing beneath her heart the innocent pledge of an affection so swiftly fled, she was chained to a home which she could scarcely any longer call her own; she felt herself lonely indeed, truly forsaken, and completely miserable.

Want stood at the door, and she therefore condescended to write to her father, and beg his assistance. Though she did not initiate him into all her misery, the count guessed that all was not right, and he therefore sent a handsome sum of money to M. Melun, an estimable Frenchman, whose acquaintance he had made during one of his travels, and begged him by all means to receive his daughter into his house till the birth of her child, and as soon as possible to give him precise information about her position.

Shortly after that, the count received the mournful tidings that the marquise was dead, after having given birth to a still-born son. M. Melun gave a minute account of her last days, and expressed his admiration of the strength of mind with which she had borne her misfortunes and her suffering, while at the same time he manifested his resentment at the shameful conduct of his despicable countryman, the marquis. The latter had quitted France, and no one knew where he was to be found. Inclosed was a short note, which the marquise had written to her father a few days before her confinement, and which was found in one of her repositories

after her death. She indeed expressed in it no contrition, yet the few words she had written moved her kindred deeply. She thanked her father and her aunt for the love they had always shown her, expressed the fear that she would not survive what stood before her, and the hope that they would adopt her poor child when she was gone. The mental struggles she must have gone through during her last days, she had strength to keep in her own breast; but the simple and affectionate tone of the little note gave hope that these had refined her moral nature.

The count was forced to acknowledge that her death was a blessing; but yet this fresh blow shook him violently, for his strength was undermined. Still the spirit did not yield, so long as his constitutionally strong frame supported him; and he did not shrink from the duty of showing the last mark of respect to the mortal remains of his daughter, brought home by his orders; although the funeral ceremonies were greatly protracted by the presence of the tenantry, who had begged permission to attend it in form.

The corpse arrived at Gyldenholdt one evening in November, and next day was placed in the chapel. However little reason Fransiska had given her kindred to love her during her life, yet the story of her sufferings and melancholy end made their hearts bleed. They were deeply moved on beholding the coffin which contained the remains of the once proud and beautiful Fransiska, who had left her fatherland with such bright hopes of happiness. Death was a silent but powerful pleader for her in all their hearts, and they felt no anger, but sorrow only, in thinking how sadly that life had ended, which might have been so full of joy and blessing, had she herself but willed it so.

The service was solemn, and the train of course large. Waldemar Krone was there, and was deeply affected. On the coffin lay three wreaths; one was woven by Baroness Louise, the second by Countess Adelaide, and the third by Ida Krone. The old count held himself

erect, but care stood so deeply printed on his wrinkled countenance that more than one of those present thought that perhaps they were looking at him for the last time.

He survived his daughter, however, for a year. During this time Waldemar Krone came now and then to Gyl-denholdt, and once or twice, being earnestly pressed to do so, he brought his wife with him. However much the sight of Ida might remind the count of her whose place she had taken, he still seemed to find a noble and unselfish pleasure in contemplating the happiness of the young married couple.

"It might have been worse," said he to his sister, "for Krone's happiness, too, might have been destroyed; better late than never, but he should have begun where he has ended."

When after the count's death his last will came to the knowledge of the family, all were agreeably surprised; for after the death of the marquise it was conjectured that he would give his money to public institutions. This, however, was only the case with a smaller portion of it, which came to the advantage of the necessitous of the barony in the form of an hospital. Moreover, he remembered his relatives handsomely, and, in the last place, Waldemar Krone was surprised by a legacy amounting to the sum which the erection of the new mansion had cost. For Sass, during his management of affairs at the time of Krone's residence abroad, had taken the opportunity of enlightening himself on the subject; and the bailiff's good opinion, once secured, here showed its fruit to Waldemar.

Count Wilhelm, when he had made himself acquainted with the papers his uncle left behind him, could not but be astonished how slight a knowledge he had really had of the old man and his mode of acting while he was still alive. He had sometimes in his own mind accused his uncle of avarice, and now discovered that he had exercised benevolence on a grand scale. He was forced to admire the rare order and wise economy which discov-

ered itself in the smallest of his undertakings, and he acknowledged that here there was much for himself to learn. Some of the notes of the deceased revealed, too, that he had possessed deep religious feelings. "Why," thought Wilhelm, "was the old man always so reserved? Had he not always kept me as he did at arm's length, my behavior to him would have been far more cordial."

Count Wilhelm was not entirely wrong in this; but yet there is something natural in the fact that between the possessor of a throne and the heir to it—even if it be only a baronial one—coolness should easily arise. In the count's harsh manner there was not so much ill will toward the heir-apparent himself as a protest against the modern ideas which the latter maintained with regard to the management of the barony.

That much would now be changed, Sass marked at once; and he therefore took the prudent resolution to withdraw at the right time. His last achievement at Gyldenholdt was moreover to procure the dismissal of Dr. Goldschmidt from his post of family physician. The doctor wished to rebel against the old man in the eleventh hour, but as Count Wilhelm only watched an opportunity to get rid of him, he was obliged to quit Gyldenholdt before Sass. Countess Louise did not take this so much to heart as she would once have done; for from the moment Dr. Goldschmidt changed his allegiance so lightly, broke the jaegermester's staff across, and swore to the marquis's colors, it seemed to her that his medicine lost its healing power.

Sass went to live on a nice little property, and passed the rest of his days cheerfully and free from care, though it cannot be said that he withdrew from the world. On the contrary, he continued to be privy councillor in a wide circle. A piece of good advice and a good glass of wine were always to be had with Sass, with long-winded stories from the olden times into the bargain. Among these, the narrative of his journey express to Copenhagen, and of the confidential audience

with his excellency Von Harde, took a prominent place; and the story usually ended with a volley of curses hurled at the head of the Marquis de Beaufort.

CHAPTER XX.

CONCLUSION.

ABOUT a year and a half after the marriage of Waldemar and Ida, one fine bright day in June their pleasant dwelling and its environs wore a festive and holiday look. Ida had two months before brought her husband a son, and the first-born was this day to be baptized, and called after his grandfather on the mother's side. The house was full of visitors, and who these were we shall find out by degrees.

Early in the morning Waldemar stood alone in his room, and looked out over the sea. The wood was now fresh and bright, the fields adorned with the brightest verdure of spring, and the blue waves of the ocean were curled by a slight breeze. It was a view which might well charm him, and yet his mien was sad, and he looked downward as he stood.

The door opened, and Ida entered. How lightly she trod, how bright was the smile on her rosy lips, how beaming her glance! He did not observe she was there till she laid her hand on his arm.

"Waldemar!"

"My Ida!"

"You are so grave, my dear!"

"Let me look at *you* for a little, and it will soon pass away."

"What, then, are you thinking about?"

"I am not now thinking about it any more."

"Tell me what it was! It will do you good to give it vent; to-day we should surely all be glad."

"Just my own thought! To-day we should be glad, for what more is wanting to us? Therefore I will settle matters with my specters in private."

"With the specters?"

"Yes; they visit me sometimes, but they shall not annoy you, my sweet little wife!"

"Are you thinking of bygone times, of—HER?"

"Peace be with the dead! God sometimes shows me my past life in a darkened mirror, that my future may come out but the brighter."

"Are you not happy, Waldemar?"

"Unspeakably happy—how can you doubt it? But when God drew the arrow out of my heart, he allowed a slight sting to remain, for my own best interests, I suppose. For you, on the other hand, all is bright—time past, time present, time to come, even as you have merited."

"Hide nothing from me! I want to see those specters."

"Why should I vex you every time a grave thought occurs to me? To-day I will however tell you all. I was thinking of how much you must have suffered for my sake; I thanked God heartily that all this was passing over or passing away; I prayed to him to give me wisdom to preserve our happiness."

"God himself bless thee indeed, my beloved!"

"And so I said to myself, as I have often done in my serious moments, how is it possible to love any being, without at the same time trusting him? Wherever there is love, faith and hope are never quite extinguished. From your earliest childhood, throughout all the changes of your youth, and its bitterest mortifications, you have still loved and trusted me. You have taught me what trust is, and now I love God and trust in him!"

Shortly after this, Ida was sitting in an excited but happy mood by the little one's cradle, when Frederica entered.

"Have you seen any of the others?" asked Ida.

"Yes, I have," answered Frederica in a dejected tone; "I met Frank down in the garden."

"Is there any difference between you again? You have not become any better friends of late."

Frederica dried a tear from her eyes, then laughed, and said at last:

"I wish you could tell me one thing, Ida!"

"What is that?"

"If I am betrothed to Frank or not?"

"You betrothed—to FRANK! Why, to begin with, I have never even observed anything like love between you!"

"No? Well, that is probable enough! It is really enough to make one crazy, for when others are present, Frank is so stiff and constrained, but when we are alone he takes possession of me in an intolerably domineering manner. He considers it as his right to walk with me, and then he asks me the strangest questions, which I don't know how to answer. One can't be betrothed, can one, without being first proposed to?"

"Not well," replied Ida, laughing; but thereupon she colored, for she remembered Frank's proposal to herself. "I am heartily glad if you have a liking for Frank, for he has an honest warm heart; but he is peculiar in many things, and so—well—in his manner of proposing also. No fear; he will speak out distinctly enough at last."

"The worst of it is, that when I don't know what he means, he looks so frightfully distressed."

"This frightful distress must be undergone, my dear, and with God's help, it will end in gladness. Now dry your eyes; I don't wish to see anything but happy faces to-day."

Now came Mrs. Stainforth, and she was as fussy as any grandmother, who has recently attained this dignity, usually is. Next arrived Aunt Lene, walking straight over from Bonderup; she held herself as erect as the first time we made her acquaintance. The spectacles

rested as firmly on her nose as ever, and the immense bag, known as Lene's knapsack, of course was not forgotten. Baroness Malte and Clara Bruun completed the circle, and the ladies had sufficient occupation in admiring the little hero of the day, taking up arms against Aunt Lene's inherent aversion to babies.

Meanwhile Baron Malte and Frank were taking a walk in the garden.

"Peerless, Frank—peerless!" exclaimed the baron, knocking the ashes from his cigar with a little jerk, which was peculiar to him.

"What is so?" the other asked, as he endeavored to follow Von Malte's eye to the admired object.

"Everything, man!—the house, the garden, the site, the view! It is the most complete thing I have seen anywhere. Come, let us sit down a little on this bench, from which, between the gable of the house and the trees, we have a charming peep at the sea."

"Friend Krone is certainly incomparably well off," said Frank. "It makes me sick to think of the dirty town, and the post of assistant-lecturer I have been fortunate enough to get."

"But Krone does not live an idle life! He engages heartily in the management of his property, and the farm is all in the most beautiful order. Do you think that a man bred up to books can betake himself to anything so practical as agriculture without a great deal of trouble? But Krone can do anything he likes; he has good ideas, and a remarkably happy grasp in working them out. I trace something in him, Frank, which promises still more than what he has yet performed. You shall see, he will not stand still at farming; he will, perhaps, in some way or other, open a career for himself, or in any case he will become a proprietor whose influence will be traced in a wider circle."

"I should be delighted if you turn out to be right."

"Tell me now," asked the baron after a pause, "why you will not stand godfather to the child? Your refusal distressed him."

"Ah—I am not fit for it."

"Not fit for it?" returned the baron, laughing.

"Yes, just so."

"Explain yourself to me more distinctly."

"Since then you will know it," replied Frank with embarrassment. "Well, now—the thing is, that I must promise in case of the parents' death to procure the child a Christian education,—and that I neither can nor will."

"You are conscientious to an unheard-of degree, Frank!"

"And you who call yourselves Christians are often incomprehensibly careless in regard to Christian, or rather church matters."

"Are not you, then, a Christian?"

"Not at all!"

"It must be annoying to you, Frank, to think that you have been baptized. The baptism, at any rate, you cannot wash off again!"

"No, unfortunately not!"

"And the more I think of your conscientiousness, the more I pity you for living in a Christian land; that is to say, for the sake of your own happiness. Tell me, now, if you were ever to fall in love" (here Frank blushed up to the roots of his hair), "and to become engaged, how would you get married? Could you allow yourself to be united in the name of Jesus?"

"May I ask, baron," exclaimed Frank, hotly, "if this is a masked attempt at conversion? A nice method! Should I then sacrifice my convictions for the sake of a girl?"

"But is it not very hard to sacrifice the girl for the sake of the convictions? We have not civil marriage here in the country—though there is no saying if we may not live to get it—but even if we had it, do you think that any Danish maiden worth having would take you without the blessing of the church?"

"That church is—my Medusa head; it meets my gaze everywhere; it is frightful how deeply such prejudices

can take root, and be propagated from generation to generation!"

"At the same time, it is extremely remarkable, is it not? Whatever else in the world has ups and downs, still we always find the church again, and I am afraid, my good Frank, it will not be possible to get the better of it. Would it not be worth a little trial to see if it is not in the right? I did so—and it was successful."

Here Frank had got something to speculate upon, and he became entirely silent; suddenly he rose up, and went alone through the wood down to the sea.

By degrees they all assembled in the garden, which soon resounded with lively chat and merry laughter. Clara and Ida took a little private ramble through a shrubbery.

"What joy, Ida," said Clara, "to see Aunt Lene and Waldemar joking together!"

"It is almost still more pleasant to hear them discuss any serious subject with one another."

"I believe you are right, Ida! She sometimes listens to his words with a certain glad surprise which pleased, and, at the same time, amused me. How delightful it is, Ida, to be here with you in your comfortable home, and to witness your happiness!"

"Yes, Clara, God is good, and life is sweet!"

"Ida—Clara!" shouted Waldemar, so that the echo from the great barn responded.

They both now came out of the shrubbery, and found the whole circle assembled in earnest consultation.

"Come," shouted Waldemar, "we are going on a chase."

"On a chase—hurrah!" returned the baron, waving his hat.

"On a chase—after what?" inquired Clara.

"After a poacher," replied Bruun.

"After Frank," Waldemar Krone corrected him. "The ladies shall be the bushbeaters, we the hunters! Come away!"

They all now went merrily into the wood, and followed the path down to the Fisher's Headland, which they knew was Frank's favorite spot. They found him there sure enough, sitting on the trunk of a felled tree, with bare head and a gloomy thoughtful brow. They came behind him, and formed a circle round him, while he rose with a confused look.

"Now, we have caught the criminal," said the baron, "the gentlemen of the chase have appointed me judge, and I shall therefore set forth the condition on which grace can be shown. It runs thus—that Mr. Assistant Frank does the master and mistress of Tiorholm the favor and the honor of standing godfather to their first-born. Is it accepted, Frank?"

"Yes, it is!" replied Frank, after a momentary hesitation, looking round the circle with a half-bashful, half-resolute mien.

The fact was, that Frank, before being thus surrounded and caught, had come to this resolution, though not without a struggle.

"Well, that is brave!" exclaimed the baron, delighted. "The jaegermester says it is time for us to go home and get dressed for church. Should not each one take his lady, and return in couples through the wood?"

The proposal was agreed to. Waldemar took his mother-in-law and Baroness Adelaide, the baron took Ida and Clara, Bruun Aunt Lene, and so Frank and Frederica were left alone together.

A short pause ensued, during which Frederica's bright dark eyes looked dim, and her color rose, while Frank took up his hat and brushed it with unseasonable carefulness. At last he went forward to her, and offered her his arm, which she took, after she had, with seeming coolness, first drawn on her gloves.

Frederica's manner during this ramble was at the beginning marked by an offended air; Frank's was, on the other hand, embarrassed; but by degrees she thawed, and he recovered his composure. They remained far behind the rest of the party, and it must be taken for

granted that Frank had at last explained himself in a sufficiently distinct manner, for the next day the betrothal was announced with great rejoicing.

Count Wilhelm had meantime arrived, and so all the godfathers were present; they shortly after drove to the church, which was bright, cheerful, and adorned with flowers. If any of those present had approached the font with feelings of indifference or of reluctance, Pastor Kortsén was able to inspire them with respect for the holy ordinance. However much doubt and resistance still remained in Frank's soul on this occasion, there is reason to hope that the same conscientiousness which had nearly kept him back from participation in the ordinances of the church, will yet become a foundation-stone, on which, in the course of time, may be built imperishable ramparts.

An hour afterward they all sat round the festive board in the dining-hall at Tiørnholm. The doors to the garden stood open, the fragrance of flowers streamed in, and beyond gleamed the fresh blue sea in the bright beams of the summer sun. But what was the charming sea, and what were all the beauty and grandeur of nature around Tiørnholm, compared with the gladness and peace that dwelt therein? What was the glancing of the waves in the sunshine compared with all these beaming looks within? and what the song of the larks, to the glad laughter around the festive board of Waldemar and Ida?

Who did not feel, who saw her sit there in the fullness of youth and beauty, with the fresh tint of pleasure on the lovely face, and the brilliancy of happiness in the mild pure glance, that from her issued the spirit of peace and love which dwelt under that roof? And who did not feel safe, on contemplating his noble and manly countenance, and observing the resolution and tranquillity which more and more discovered themselves in his look, his speech, and behavior?

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